

2/18am Essay notes, miscellaneous rambling, bloviations and pot shots

12-05-09 Norman Mailer Memory

In the fall of 2006 Norman Mailer invited me to visit him at his home in Provincetown, Massachusetts. We had been corresponding for nine years at the time, exchanging a few letters each year. Our friendship began in 1997 when I wrote him a letter about his new book Picasso as a Young Man, my letter was quite long. In it I discussed many aspects of Picasso's life as written in Norman's book and concluded with a discussion of Cubism, a topic on which I had lectured at Harvard, USC, and many other places. To my amazement, Norman wrote back, a two page, single-spaced typed letter, in which he said my criticism of his book was the finest he received from any publication in the country and he appreciated it very much and...if I was such an expert on Cubism that I should write a book on it. This was a challenge too potent to deny and I proceeded to write this book, Station Point, Two Steps Publishing Co. 1998, Norman coached me on the text at a few milestones and helped greatly with his editing suggestions. On the weekend of my visit, I flew into Boston, spent the night at the Harvard Faculty Club and on the following day I rented a car and made the four hour drive out to P-town. I arrived in the late afternoon and appeared at the door of Norman's beautiful brick house (mansion - a former nunnery). His gorgeous wife Norris (former couture model, author of Windchill Summer - a superb novel) answered the door, invited me in and informed Norman of my arrival. I busted out in a massive grin and overcame my nervousness at being in the presence of my favorite writer, philosopher, American public figure of all-time. I began reading Norman's work as a nineteen year old and felt he was the only writer who understood and wrote so clearly about the passionate chaos of my childhood family life. His writing was a bright light out in the emotional/intellectual chaos. Norman had a great big smile himself and welcomed me in, Norris left us and Norman invited me into his den with a big row of picture windows that looked out on Boston Harbor. Norman asked me what drink I preferred and upon hearing scotch, he opened a new bottle of a great single malt, 25 year old Balvenie, not certain. We began a conversation about writers and critics and art and after finishing our drinks Norman mentioned that he made a reservation for dinner at P-town's finest restaurant for us. Norris was working on her next novel, Cheap Diamonds, and bowed out of joining us. It was fun to walk into a public place with a big celebrity and sense the heads turning and the whispering. Norman was greeted by the hostess as a distinguished local citizen rather than a big star. Our dinner lasted for four hours, we shut the place down. Once the conversation began it just stormed like a hurricane over a hundred different subjects. Norman recounted his experience as a movie director (four films) and likened it to being a general in the Army. He savored the total command of organizing a movie production, opposed to his status as a private in the real Army during WWII. We discussed Muhammad Ali, Ryan O'Neil, Isabella Rossellini, both of whom appeared in one of Norman's movies. Norman was surprised to hear that my father had been married two more times than himself, five for Norman, seven for my dad (ouch! Who were those women? Maaaa - meatloaf ma). My mother was only married three times. We talked about going to school at Harvard. We talked about the Kennedys who Norman was close to when Jack Kennedy was running for president. My Kennedy experience was limited to passing Caroline on a very long snowy path across some

Harvard real estate over a winter break. Here comes someone on the narrow path through the snow, off in the distance, it's a woman, the path isn't wide enough for both of us, she's getting closer, she's wearing a long black overcoat. I'm going to have to turn sideways at some point to let this woman brush past, It's Caroline Kennedy! We smiled at each other, passed and went on our way. One morning at Elsie's Café I was sitting at the counter eating breakfast after running my daily thirty flights of stairs at Harvard stadium. Joe Kennedy and his entourage walk in. I'm facing a large African-American waitress whose face lights up like she's staring at Jesus himself - I turn around and there stands a smiling, laser blue-eyed Kennedy. It was wild to see the effect on the staff - the place went electric. The only other time I'd seen cosmic scale charisma like that was the night Rick Derringer and his entourage crowded to the front of a line at a Dave Brubeck concert in Cleveland the night before they opened for Aerosmith at a local arena. During our conversation, I told Norman a story about an Army experience of mine and he laughed, said it was a classic and insisted that I write it. Here is that story.

In 1971 I was a buck sergeant in the Army, three stripes. Not an insignificant rank in the world of enlisted men. I was twenty years old and in charge of the graphic design office at the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters at Fort Bragg North Carolina. My duties included preparing slide shows for visiting foreign heads of state that instructed them on the features of modern U.S. Army airborne operations. I once walked past Joseph Mobutu as he chatted with some generals after one of these presentations. I also drew a cartoon each week for the Fort Bragg newspaper, The Paraglide, I painted large, humorous portraits of retiring colonels that were presented at their banquets and on the side I painted large pictures for top sergeants to hang in their homes and I jumped out of a plane once a month. I had a great stereo hooked up in my office where my hardworking staff of six could listen to the latest Hendrix, Cream, The Who, Ten Years After, Santana, Dylan, Janis, Mike Bloomfield, Joe Cocker, The Band, etc. The walls of this office were covered with my drawings and paintings. This was a command center for the counterculture in the belly of the beast, as the XVIII Airborne Corps is the headquarters group for the 82d Airborne division (known at the time as the "Jumping Junkies). Lots of officers and enlisted men in the headquarters building liked to hang out in my office and during evenings where the lights were on until my hand cramped up from drawing usually around eleven. None of the high ranking officers in the building seemed to mind the tenor of my office as long as we turned out great slide show material which we did. Thanks to Curt Moore, Joe Cusumano, Tommy Budzinski and many others. In May of 1971, Army troops from Fort Bragg and Marines from Camp Le Jeune were airlifted to Washington D.C. to subdue student anti-war protestors who threatened to shut down the federal government with a "Mayday '71" event. The protestor's motto: "If the government won't stop the war - we'll stop the government". Many tens of thousands of protestors were led by Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, Lee Weiner etc. After we landed at Andrews Air force Base, the troops from the XVIII Airborne Corps rode in trucks to Fort McHenry near the capitol. My job was to prepare large maps with many plastic overlays of battle plans that involved countering stated strategies of the protestors to shut down traffic in the city. The protestors printed up a very useful (to the Federal troops) "Tactical Manual" that listed

the twenty one key bridges and traffic circles they intended to snarl. Areas that I was dealing with involved these roadways as well as the Pentagon, The Washington Monument, The Lincoln Memorial and many others. I used colored grease pencil and Chartpak tape to create large red and green arrows indicating troop movements and chopper landing zones just as if we were in a foreign war. After working all day on these maps in the basement of the Fort McHenry Command Center, I was hanging around for further instructions in a large dayroom where ten or so top Army and Marine generals and colonels who had gathered in a semi-circle on folding chairs to watch the ten o'clock news on a little black and white television. After watching footage of large masses of students on the streets with thousands getting arrested (13,000 total) the newscaster stood next to Rennie Davis, the chief organizer of the march and its appointed leader. Rennie was a little, frail looking long-haired young guy wearing John Lennon glasses. After Rennie spoke, a gruff Marine general leaned forward, pulled his cigar out of his mouth and jabbing it at the tv screen said: "You mean to tell me we flew 70,000 troops to Washington D.C. for that skinny little prick!" Norman found this greatly amusing.

1. 10-20-09 Beatles - Law and Music

An idea for a take home final exam in Law School. Calculate the county jail, state and federal prison exposure for crimes committed, threatened or implied in the lyrics of the Beatles song catalog between 1962 and 1970. The low-hanging fruit: Maxwell Addison - murder one with circumstances - life in prison - that silver hammer stunt. The theft by Lovely Rita of the poor guy's heart - six months in the county jail - larceny. Rocky Raccoon gets punched in the eye by his rival - assault and battery - six months suspended sentence - electronic monitoring - three years probation with one year of anger management class. We all live in a yellow submarine - one of you are distributing prescription pharmaceuticals. Were these "mother's little helpers"? Did you steal them from her medicine chest? Did you distribute them to minors? Just exactly who got on board? Were these people over eighteen? - six months in county jail, three years probation, drug treatment program. "Run for Your Life"- felony domestic abuse threatening bodily harm "catch you with another man - that's the end- a - little girl" the prosecutor in the D.A.'s office sees a murder threat and also felony child endangerment if the victim is indeed a "Little Girl". Defense claimed that "that's the end -a " only refers to the romance - they'll lose in California - two years in state prison - one year to serve with five years probation. "Till there was you" those bells on a hill that you always heard ringing, were they your bells? - violation of noise ordinance - reprimand, court costs - remove bells. "For the Benefit of Mr. Kite" who exactly is this "Henry the Horse"? Horse is a name for heroin - dances the waltz? Injected? Snorted? Smoked? It's all gonna get you in big trouble. "Get high with a little help from my friends" depends on which state and how many friends. "Roll up - Roll up for the Magical Mystery Tour" Roll what up? Some Mary Jane? Mystery Tour - you bet, with munchies on the back end. - six months in the county jail for possession of a controlled substance or alternately, must be addressing a small army of the physically challenged in their wheelchairs - ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) violations abound - are there curb cuts? What is the slope of the ramp to the door of the bus? Surface texture? Coefficient of friction of pavement? Seat spacing on the bus? "Step right this way" any truncated cones for the visually impaired, license for operating a

tour bus, special use permit for public gathering over ten persons and with music -all misdemeanors. "Semolina Pilchard climbing up the Eiffel Tower" disturbing the peace, public nuisance, trespassing on public monument. "Why don't we do it in the road?" - better not - indecent exposure - two counts - six month suspended sentence with fifty hours of trash clean up along said road. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" how high was Lucy? If over five hundred feet she would need clearance from local airport tower and a license to be an ultra-light aircraft. Were diamonds attached to her body or clothing or free floating - if the latter then they are at risk of being sucked into engines of a passing jetliner - crash risk. VFR or IFR conditions? If Lucy is in the sky in low-visibility, she is a very hazardous object - six month suspended sentence for interfering with commercial air traffic. Walking along a "Long and Winding Road?" - are you white or black? North of the Mason Dixon line or south? If between 1900 and 1945 and if black you are picked up and charged with loitering and sentenced to thirty days at the county work farm. While there, you are "sold" to a labor broker who, in turn, sells you to the Steel plant in Big City, Southern State where you are worked to death with no medical care while being beaten and starved - i.e. a death sentence. You never made it to her door. "Happiness is a Warm Gun" If the gun is warm because you fired it you are in a boatload of trouble depending on your jurisdiction. Possession of a firearm? Unauthorized discharge of a firearm? If the gun is warm because it is in your pocket - concealed firearm - six months in county jail with one year probation. "Bungalow Bill went out tiger hunting" - threatening an endangered species - throw the book at him. There is a mock trial - defendant- Maxwell Addison. He is charged with first degree murder. "Made sure she was dead" Maxwell is a medical student and a painter "...testimonial pictures - Joan" his defense asserts that Maxwell's deranged mental state was from unreasonable hours as an intern in a big city hospital "majoring in medicine" and his temporary insanity at the time of killing was due to inhalation of volatile vapor from his oil painting materials in his unventilated garret studio.

11-18-09 Mom Story - "Fix me some eggs"

I heard this request / command a thousand times from my inebriated mother who, after polishing off the first few beers in her evening six-pack, would ask me to fix her some eggs - her dinner. These words achieved a mantra status by the time I was a senior in high school. I was always too timid to reply: "Fix your own eggs." I bought into her oft-stated reasoning that because she was the breadwinner, her four children owed her meals and a clean house / mowed lawn. This was in 1966 when she was forty- three years old. Fifteen years previously she was given a hysterectomy that my father thought had launched her into a life-long struggle with mental illness (countless hospitalizations, the longest for two years from 1954 -1956) At this late date I wonder if her request / plaint didn't carry a hidden request to fix the egg producing components of her body. "Fix me some eggs!" like I was God and could re-build her fallopian tubes and uterus.

2. 12-20-09 Art

For the past two weeks I have been trying to memorize the shapes and relationships of the contiguous forty eight states in order to use this knowledge in a series of riffs on Jasper

Johns' iconic encaustic map paintings. Now that I am aware of the shapes of the state's borders and this information is now in the forefront of my consciousness I am beginning to have some fun seeing state outlines in cracks in the sidewalk and cracked asphalt parking lots and driveways. I go on long walks two or three times a week along city sidewalks from Redwood City to Menlo Park in the San Francisco Bay Area. I usually walk at night. Lately I've been finding lots of state shapes in the sidewalk. As you have already guessed, Wyoming turns up a lot, as do Kansas and Colorado as well as the Dakotas but all that is required for a good Vermont / New Hampshire combo is a single sinuous angled crack across one of the Wyomings. I recently found Minnesota, Nevada, Maryland, Idaho, Missouri and New York, South Carolina is quite a common shape. My favorite so far is a Wisconsin / Illinois combo. I recently encountered a broken up asphalt driveway that, while squinting, could be imagined as the entire forty eight!

3. 12-5-09 Art

Clement Greenberg's * mystification in the face of Picasso and Braque's invention of Cubism is analogous to a U.S. Supreme Court justice finding *Marbury v Madison* a big mystery. It is odd that an art critic and theorist widely hailed as the most powerful and influential of the twentieth century can be mystified by the foundations of his chosen field. Evidence of Greenberg's mis-framing of Cubism is that he viewed Cubism as something transcendent, a higher synthesis of previous recent avant-garde art developments in painting. Cubism is a devolution from Cezanne, a Cliff's notes, a Cezanne for Dummies, A complete idiot's guide to Cezanne's paradigm shattering art. Cubism is an abstract shorthand of the salient features of late Cezanne's skewed linear perspective, the passage, the fracture and the crippled drawing, strategies that conflated pictorial space and the surface of the canvas. The profound Godliness of Cezanne was inaccessible to ambitious youth in a hurry but his strategies had to be assimilated and demonstrated thus Cubism's unpinned station point, simultaneity and constricted narrative content. Talented and ambitious young artists in Paris were not about to spend ten years in isolation in the countryside with an umbrella, a canvas stool and a box of paints in order to commune with God. They were, however, glad someone had done as much and were all happy to acknowledge the monumental achievement. Cubism was a tool for instant access to Cezanne, a shorthand, Cezanne light. It helps me to have struggled as a painter with Cubism for many years, not limited to intellectual/ literary devices only. Reading and looking are not enough to grasp Cubism fully - one must have two sets of knowledge: the theory and graphic procedures of linear perspective and experience as a painter investigating ideas of pictorial space otherwise one gets bogged down in semantics and vaporous musing - see: everything ever written about Cubism from day one until now.

* "How Picasso and Braque got to their Cubism in 1910 and proceeded thence to 1914 remains unimaginable to me" - Greenberg's 1980 essay in *Late Writings*, ed. Robert C. Morgan, Janice Van Hoove, Univ. of MN Press, 2003

4. 12-5-09 Art

Richard Diebenkorn's first New York gallery show was in 1954. It sold out. It was a

big hit, why? Matisse had recently died and was on everyone's mind and Diebenkorn's work looked as if he were channeling Matisse. The bold color, the brushwork, composition / geometries and line. RD arrived on the scene with work that was as familiar as an old shoe to the New York art cognoscenti and as seductive as sex. Just as Diebenkorn capitalized on a brand that had been road/culture/market tested, so did Andy Warhol but where RD rode on the back of the 20th Century's most hallowed art world brand -Henri Matisse, Warhol expanded his scope to encompass the great brands of all consumer culture.

5. In 1954 Richard Diebenkorn was scanning Matisse's early years for inspiration. During the "Ocean Park" years in his Venice, California studio Diebenkorn had narrowed his focus on Matisse to a single painting, "Zora on the Terrace" painted in 1912. The entire Ocean Park series, considered to be masterpieces by many-not me, is based on only the background of this single painting. Diebenkorn looked as closely at and borrowed from Matisse as though Matisse were nature itself - metamimesis.

6. 2-17-10 Art

The celebration of machine finish in the work of Judd, Koons, Murikami and Hirst removes the only qualifier, touch, that could tell us if bliss were present or not in the end product. Machine finish is a useful trope in the world of commodity art. If we can deny touch as a component of the highest quality work then second rate work can pass as masterpieces. This work may have had sublime touch, thus qualifying it for the pantheon but we'll never know. These artists have become like architects i.e. executives in an object delivery system. There is no "touch" in a work of architecture other than that of the anonymous workmen who build it. Lack of touch in a building does not edit it from consideration from the pantheon of the sublime but it does edit out a work of art.

7. 10-14-09 Art

We are entering the zone of the one hundredth anniversary of the epochal pan-cultural paradigm shift that changed all art and science. The year 1912 is the locus of revolutions in painting, physics, music, dance, fiction, poetry, politics and technology. It was as if the earth passed through an intergalactic cloud whose molecules shook our civilization to its roots. Imagine a gas was inhaled by creative geniuses of the time: Picasso and Braque invent Cubism, Einstein develops the Special Theory of Relativity, Stravinsky and Schoenberg develop new tonal systems for making music, Isadora Duncan unpin Baroque dance (classical ballet), the Wright Brothers introduce pitch, yaw and roll simultaneously into the possibilities of human mechanized movement, James Joyce experiments with fictional expression, motion pictures are invented and all of life begins to accelerate intensely.

It is time to celebrate one of the more potent of these manifestations of the 1912 shift - Cubism. Locating the locus of the birth of Cubism (rather than the proto-Cubism of "Les Demoiselles D'Avignon") in the work done by Picasso in the mountain village of Gosol in the summer of 1909 and spring of 1910 when he painted "Portrait of Fanny Tellier". The autumn of 2009 and spring of 2010 is the hundredth anniversary of this

great group of paintings. Let's celebrate this development, Cubism, that changed all visual art and architecture ever after. Cubism is the slice of this big paradigm shift pie that changed civilization that belongs to artists / architects.

8. 5-14-09 Music

Bob Dylan, as a great artist who had so many brilliant ideas about his chosen art - songwriting, Dylan should be able to make the distinction between concept and expression. In his memoir, Dylan fails to make the distinction between art and painting. The following is an example for Bob. Andy Warhol was a mediocre painter, silk screener but a great artist. He had a big idea about art and popular culture. A person can look at a Warhol work and say he was an uninspired painter, Andy would be the first to agree but one cannot say that he was an uninspired artist. It's not about the painting, it's about the art. Millions of civilians fail to make this distinction, Bob Dylan among them.

9. 5-29-09 Architecture

Le Corbusier was furious about his rejection by the team developing the United Nations Headquarters building in New York. Corbu supplied the concept for this project and then was rejected by the Americans as the architect of record perhaps because of his avowed communism and deep complicity with the Vichy government in France during WWII (Corbu is lucky he wasn't shot after the war). It is disappointing that Corbu couldn't have quit this scene gracefully instead of whining for so long about it, after all, he invented the language of this building - he didn't have to write every word.

10. 5-16-09 Music, Architecture

Bob Dylan creates a large musical playing field in the 1960s, a field upon which a generation of talented singer / songwriters played. Tom Waits is one of these artists playing on the field of Bob. It is interesting that after forty years Dylan has his pick of which of his students to mimic for his own uses. Dylan's current mumbly, croaky voice singing low-life stories is a big page out of his student Tom Waits' book. This is exactly what Frank Lloyd Wright did when, after inventing the playing field for twentieth century architecture, he goes to school on two of his best students, Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler. Inspired by their work which was directly derived from Wright's (they both worked in his office), Wright creates his masterpiece - Fallingwater. Wright and Dylan are exercising their artistic "Droite de seigneur" or "Jus primae noctis" over their most talented minions. It's funny that when Picasso tried this with young Diego Rivera during the late cubist years he almost got shot by Rivera who didn't take kindly to Pablo visiting his (Rivera's) studio and a few weeks later incorporating Diego's latest cubist inventions in his own painting. That Picasso was also trying to steal Rivera's girlfriend didn't help.

11. 5-17-09 Music

Bob Dylan's recent relationship to his music / lyrics is similar to that of late Picasso in that they both evince a casual-seeming language of expression. Perhaps the reason Dylan doesn't think too much of late Picasso is that he sees too much of his own relentlessly casual yet urgent laziness in him. Advice to Bob: take a six month

vacation from the road, study art / painting, write some great songs (music and lyrics) If I want to hear Robert Hunter's lyrics, I'll buy a Robert Hunter CD. Calling in a co-writer for one's lyrics is like calling in a trusted colleague to make love to your girlfriend. I doubt that Picasso ever did this. However, I love the new Dylan CD "Together Through Life" especially "It's All Good" and "My Wife's Hometown" these two songs are among Dylan's best of past twenty years.

It is perplexing to see a legendary artist in one field holding forth on adjacent art (Dylan on painting) and reveal themselves a tyro. Unless Bob Dylan must crank out an album a year to keep a mobster from breaking his knees, he should slow down, relax and let his innate wisdom emerge. It would be a shame to see an artist as great as Dylan fall into the Clancy / Patterson zone where he calls in others to write his material just to have something for the voracious entertainment maw. On the other hand, there are hundreds of great songwriters in America who would love to write a song for or with Dylan. Let the co-writing continue. Dylan as messenger rather than oracle.

In order to do great things, artists need great critics. Dylan's biggest handicap at present is that his legend status dissolves all constructive criticism into fawning encomiums. Dylan has entered the late Picasso zone where there is no effective criticism and the art wanders loosely. Picasso did his finest thinking / painting from 1905 - 1914 when surrounded by his vicious friends, his Bande au Picasso. Where is Bob's Bande au Dylan who would kick his artistic ass for a few late great works that surpass all that has gone before like late Rembrandt or Turner Dylan so admires. To date, Dylan's late phase resembles that of Picasso for whom he has little regard.

12. 2-17-10 Art

Metamimesis: The abstraction of abstraction i.e. Picasso abstracting Cezanne who abstracted nature and what is nature an abstraction of? God? Pure energy?

13. 10-20-09 Art

Every artwork contains its yin - the work itself and its yang - the consciousness of the viewer. In the pre-World War One era in Paris all viewers carried a firm knowledge of the history of western painting from their visits to the Louvre as well as visits to annual Beaux Arts exhibitions - the official, state-sponsored salons. This was a very savvy audience whose astute members could see that the work of Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, and Braque was extending a great tradition, that these artists were pioneers breaking the bonds of a stagnant realm of ideas about painting. If an artist knows that his/her audience is informed, educated, trained and curious for the new, he can explore more boldly without being completely divorced from fellow humans. The esthetic, intellectual fertility of the Paris citizen inspired adventure in their avante-garde artists. The game was on. When a community of artists can depend on an educated adventurous audience, their ideas can flourish. In a hermetic pressure cooker like New York City where the level of education and the taste for esthetic adventure spikes far above the provincial norm and you add feisty, ambitious, erudite and voluble art critics, the dance between yin(artist and his work)and yang (audience) becomes extreme, thus events like Jackson Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Newman, Rothko can occur followed by a fevered yin/yang tango with Warhol, Lichtenstein and Stella. Then the stakes get even higher and mostly

inaccessible to the flyovers: Judd, Andre, and Flavin.

Thomas Kinkaide works just as hard as Chuck Close every day at his easel but he gets no respect from the cognoscenti. Kinkaide is playing to an unschooled yang. To people who have not studied art. Kinkaide must stock each painting with its own yang - its own apologists, its own total story. His audience brings so little to his party that he must help them and they respond to his efforts by purchasing his work in monumental quantities. In the art establishment there is an assumption of yang level that makes Kinkaide uncool and Warhol or now, Richard Prince, king. You must at least know the Greenberg/ Rosenberg stable of artists as well as Duchamp to “get” Andy Warhol. You must be trained in contemporary art and theory. People whose parents spent the money to ensure their children’s training do not want to waste that intellectual capital by diffusing the heft of their yang on the likes of Thomas Kinkaide. How does one explain John Currin? Or the narrative, anecdotal hyperglycemic work that fills the walls of the Mary Boone Gallery or L.A. Louver? How does one explain David Hockney’s pastoral mimesis? It’s the New Feudalism -every ship on its own bottom - the group- grope conceptual / ironic yang-fest of the 50s through 90s is over. We are now in a moment when even our most prominent new York galleries, the inner circle of the avante-garde art world, valorizes obsessive miners of a nineteenth century tradition rather than explorers. As evidence of the New Feudalism, our streets are filled with thirty-something men in their big, noisy trucks. Every one a feudal lord with no interest or faith in government on any level. There is no community either in new York City or Redwood City or anywhere in-between. The vampire squid (corporatocracy / financial industry) has had its way with us. Our blood is gone. Art is getting dumber.

14. 10-21-09 Art

Dang the yang - full steam ahead!

15. 10-20-09 Art

There are two types of artists: miners and explorers. Miners discover a conceptual lode and work it throughout their careers with adjustments to their work to give an appearance of creative development - Marcel Duchamp, Roy Lichtenstein, Norman Rockwell, Donald Judd, Carl Andre, John Currin. Explorers are always seeking new territory like Lewis and Clark or The Spanish explorers of the sixteenth century (minus the genocide). Picasso was an explorer for many years prior to his late phase when he was mining an idiosyncratic private language. Most of the artists whose names and work we know are miners. It seems to require the relentless telling of the same story to break through. One might think that there are far more miners than explorers but this is not true. It is that explorers remain obscure because their names are rarely associated with a personal style. Most miners endured an intense explorer phase, usually in art school and accompanied by anxiety, fear and poverty - there was nothing to lose by bold experimentation. Why not try a bit of everything - see what sticks to the wall. Once recognition strikes (often along with some money), the artist puts down a claim on their idea and they begin to mine it to both their exhaustion and ours. There may be an x curve at work here with the depth of the anxiety of ignominy in inverse proportion to the desire to remain an explorer once “discovered” Picasso was discovered as a little boy

and didn't have an explosive emotional event as a young man when someone first paid some money and attention to his work thus freeing him psychically to explore throughout most of his career. Edward Baum, one of my Harvard architecture professors said to me "One can measure the quality of a creative mind by how long the person can remain in a state of uncertainty." How long can one continue exploring without having an answer, a solution, either to a specific problem or to the challenge of an entire career. Does one have the guts for the anxiety of exploration. Exploring is more admirable than mining. The art establishment and our galaxy of art galleries make little money from explorers. These entities, for the most part, encourage one to become a miner ASAP. Galleries and explorers are almost always adversaries with some brave and notable exceptions. For a gallery, art is a commodity and if the brand represents something different every season it is hard to market. There's room for one or two Picasso scale explorers in a generation and everyone else who wishes to make a living in art is advised to get in line - start to mine.

16. 10-18-09 Art

Picture this - an intergalactic painting exhibition to be judged by a master alien race from Andromeda. Earth gets to send the work of three artists. Our most esteemed critics and art world experts: curators, journalists, academics, informed connoisseurs get to choose from among all artists who ever lived on Earth. This master Andromedan intelligence will know immediately who the top three actually are in terms of all variables at work in a painting. If our selectors are wrong they die, if they are correct they spend all of eternity in heaven. Will Clement Greenberg select Jackson Pollock? Will Arthur Danto select Duchamp or Andy Warhol? Tune in later for the Earth picks and the ultimate winners as selected by the wise aliens.

17. 2-16-10 Art

It is an odd, delicate, mysterious, fragile, accidental, perplexing and beautiful thing - my latest painting. It may seem incomplete but it is very much complete. I have done my work now you do yours as a viewer, experiencer, completer, engager, dancer, explorer. "Painting is supposed to be covered with paint" you say, well, this one is covered with possibility.

18. 11-21-09 Art

Bravura skill has become an ugly trap in the world of drawing and painting over the course of the past century. It is now seen as post-Cezanne seduction. The possessor of such skill seduces not only the general civilian public but often himself as well. Dash, flash, dynamic line, painterly touch (on the money with hue and placement) why?

What's not to love about this sort of work? Cezanne cracked this nut wide open and brushed it off the table. With no bravura skill or much skill at all he became the greatest painter and artist of his age or any and all ages. Cezanne proved that the deep truth and communion with universal energy was independent of physical pyrotechnics. Young Picasso had the bravura skill of his more mature and internationally successful countryman Sorolla but after seeing Cezanne in 1905 Picasso searched for deeper, more exotic sources for his work. He began to pursue ancient Iberian sculpture and sub-Saharan tribal art - a deeper vein that, when conflated with the heresies of late Cezanne, gave birth to Cubism.

19. 11-20-09 Art

Reginald Marsh is one of the great draughtsmen of the twentieth century. In the tradition of the Renaissance, sixteenth century Dutch masters, Bernini, Daumier, Lautrec. Marsh has great fluency, sublimity of expression, fearlessness, life, sex, flesh, gesture, sublimity, a sublimely erotic pencil line, sure-handed bravura image-making, compositional skill and narrative depth.

20. 11-8-09 Art

The first strokes of paint on a canvas are always beautiful, a single color against a white background is inherently pure and dramatic. The addition of a second color with its hue and shape now trying to dance with the original gesture risks a clash. Anyone can place first marks then call it quits and exhibit an unassailable work of beauty, simple though it may be. As more color is added, a painting enters its adolescence, a difficult phase characterized by troublesome clashes and soaring hope for the future. It is in trying to avoid the inevitable adolescent furies in all works of art in any medium that most amateurs doom themselves by pursuing easy, quick and premature solutions. One can measure the maturity and wisdom of a painter by how long they can patiently navigate the storm and drang, the anxiety of ambiguity of each painting. Does the painter savor the conflict? In the absence of a fully acknowledged and resolved adolescence there can be no mature work. Most paintings, most art of any kind gets lost in the quagmire of its adolescence.

21. 10-13-09 Art

Second-tier painting is a closed system. Loose ends are all tied up, all ambiguity is resolved, Chuck Close, Wayne Thiebaud, Richard Estes and John Currin come to mind. Each of these painters has proved that second tier painting can be first tier art. It takes a particular strain of courage to leave room in the work for viewer participation. When the viewer is included you double the brain waves in the art experience. Second-tier / closed-system painters erect barriers around their work that says: "Keep your distance - admire my skill, my obsessive tenacity, my hard work - don't stand too close (pun intended), don't block the sunlight - I'm the artist - you're not - I've got to spell this whole thing out for you" or perhaps "I'm just insecure and must prove to myself that I have the skill to resolve all ambiguity as if it were a sign of weakness not to have all the answers. The top rank of painters do not pretend to have all of the answers. They admit they are not God even on their own small model of the universe, their canvas. Great painters invite the viewer to help them close the gap and thus invited, the viewer

engages the work, looks more closely, he can't help himself. The mind of the viewer must try to fill the voids that remain perhaps unconsciously as a seductive invitation by its author. It is this subliminal interplay between a painting and a viewer that sets off the spark of life in the work. This spark is rarely contained in the work alone no matter how many amazing picture-making strategies are employed. This explains why so much truly mind-bending photorealism leaves one undernourished. A painter might ask herself: how might I offer this invitation in my work because painting elk nostril vapor at sunrise is not enough.

A late Cezanne painting looks very finished to us now, as does a Monet or a Rose Period Picasso. At the time these were created they were seen by many as mere daubs, far from completed work. We have been trained throughout the past one hundred years to see a lot with little modeling of form or rendering of space. We now see with potent suggestions only. Picasso and Braque taught us a code for human body parts: faces, hands, hair, limbs, therefore, the amount of visual information required to start a dialogue with the average gallery / museum visitor becomes reduced over time. This leads to engagement occurring in work that is entirely non-representational, non-narrative, non-anecdotal. Paintings such as de Kooning's "Women" of the early 1950s now appear as fleshed out as a Rococo maiden (Boucher, Fragonard).

22. 10-13-09 Art

One of the reasons Cezanne's late paintings are great is that they so deeply involve the viewer. This work demands that the viewer align the painted objects and spatial effects with one's internalized notions of linear and aerial perspective. It demands that the sketchy trees be fully foliated, the earth solidified, the sky pasted into uniform atmosphere. One's brain strives to deny the objectness of the painting and to establish pictorial space. It is as if the painting is a dehydrated sponge ripe with potential and our act of seeing adds water creating a full, round esthetic experience. Magic happens as we look. It is this tension, generated by a will to complete the work, to participate, that so fully engages us in these paintings.

23. 10-13-09 Art

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the idea of easel painting was new, the notion of a canvas being a window on the world was fresh, therefore it could sustain enormous amounts of rendered information and still engage the viewer. Not so today. Viewers blast through the Louvre in an afternoon - a million hours of hard work and inspiration gets very short shrift. People just can't see highly resolved, historic, narrative, images anymore - the magic is gone.

24. 2-16-10 Art

Thomas Kincaide puts an enormous amount of information in his paintings. Too much for anyone with any exposure to art education thus his troublesome connection with the art establishment or even informed art enthusiasts. Kincaide is the butt of a lot of unfriendly fire. He does, however speak very clearly to millions of people who have not thought much about art. Kincaide is delivering an art experience to his contemporary audience akin to that experienced by the art elite in the fifteenth century i.e. an audience

for whom the very idea a mimetic picture of the world as seen through a window is rewarding. It is not that Kincaide's audience likes 'bad' art it is that his art is the only art that they are trained to see. Think of a Kincaide painting as training wheels not as a bent bike.

25. 10-16-09 Music

Garth Brooks has sold more albums than any other solo artist in history. The great majority of these fans are hardworking middle-class American men and women i.e. scrimpers and savers struggling to survive from payday to payday. If one votes with one's pocketbook then Garth Brooks has ridden this enormous wave of populist support to the presidency of all recorded music. Now, after ten years of rest, Mr. Brooks is singing better than ever and wants to perform again. He has made a deal with Las Vegas hotelier Steve Wynn to play Las Vegas fifteen or twenty weekends a year to small audiences who pay \$150. Per ticket i.e. the rich. Garth is abandoning the people who created his popularity and wealth, following the footsteps of many elected leaders who, once they are ensconced in the halls of power, sell out their constituents via lobbyists for global corporations and financial interests that victimize the people who empowered them - the average hardworking American. Garth Brooks is now committing his artistry to his friends in high places. Garth - say it isn't so!

26. 2-16-10 Art

If institutions of higher learning that teach the "Mother Art" - architecture see fit to offer courses in the business of architecture perhaps our art departments in these same universities could offer a course called "Flash Management" - How to leverage one's fifteen minutes of fame into an entire career in the fine arts. It is the fate of most artists to lack the skills or interest in the world outside of their zone of creation to even support themselves.

27. 8-30-09 Art

When a visual artist submits to writing an artist's statement they are sacrificing their power, their mojo, their independence as visual communicators to the larger art world game, to the realm of galleries, museums and other lampreys on the act of creation. It is like bending over and spreading your ass cheeks for your doctor. You submit to his realm. "Now, this is not gonna hurt." If a person who has dedicated their career to the visual arts cannot read a work of visual art thus gaining purchase on its meaning then they ought to sell shoes. The whole reason art exists is that the idea cannot be expressed in words unless you're Jenny Holtzer. Statements about art, if they must be made, should be created by an astute other, not the artist themselves. I have been painting and writing for fifty years and I can't begin to write even a short paragraph about what my art means or what it is. It's like asking a dog what their dog statement is - "Well - let's see, I wag my tail, I like to jump into the water and I like to snooze in the sun - oh! And chase

balls. Thanks poochy, this clears up your meaning. Any artist who writes a statement about their work has been duped. If your work needs a statement in order to clarify its intention or its purpose and some work is enriched by this text, hire a grad student to write about it or an aspiring art critic. Just say no to artist's statements.

28. 8-25-09 Art

Adding value to an artist's work in painting is like adding value to a song copyright - the work is created and it can sit around being a work of genius no one knows about or the artist can engage in publicity- generating activity that brings the work into the public eye thus adding monetary value to it. Record companies used to get a large percentage of the publishing royalties originally held by the songwriter ostensibly because the companies added value that would not otherwise accrue by financing a variety of activities: videos, concerts, television appearances and record promotion. The genius of Andy Warhol is that he knowingly created art products to be marketed by his mimesis of products for which tens of millions of advertising dollars had already been spent. Warhol's work was pre-marketed. Warhol was just a flea on the back of the big dog of American commercial entities: Coca Cola, Campbell's Soup, Brillo Soap Pads, Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe. This is the core of his genius, Andy's big idea, his contribution to the canon of contemporary art stemming from Duchamp. Warhol got so much intellectual mileage out for his supposed ironic slant on consumer capitalism when it was most likely simply a very astute, streetwise use of an enormous store of untapped consumer product bounty.

29. 8-17-09 Literature

Don Quixote has committed enough unwarranted assaults by chapter three to land in prison for years. He is a violent psychopath. He has ruined the health and perhaps the lives of many innocent men. Why is this funny, charming, endearing, acceptable? Because Don Quixote is landed gentry, a nobleman, though penurious. Nobles get away with mayhem, even today. We are entertained by their violent misdeeds if they are witty, insouciant, outrageous, literate. As Nietzsche points out in his essay, "The Meaning of ascetic Ideals," violence had an entirely different meaning in society during previous centuries that we have no machinery for understanding.

Thomas Mc Guane borrows from Cervantes the notion that his protagonist is a "gentleman", a member of a minor industrial aristocracy, read business owner or scion of an industrial family preferably in an early rebellious phase sowing lots of oats and raising hell before settling down to make headlight rims in Toledo. The understanding is that readers will forgive the violent trespass of the upper crust and find them amusing where they would want to see a middle or lower class person nabbed by the law, punished or undone with guilt, if they wanted to read about him at all. Graydon Carter's Vanity Fair celebrates a specimen of the misbehaving upper class each month as a regular feature.

30. 8-18-09 Literature

Hemingway's Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls, is a knight errant of sorts wandering Spain for adventures and serving his maiden Maria who lived in her castle (cave). Hemingway and Fitzgerald leaned heavily on Don Quixote, getting their literary ticket punched so that academic recognition could be achieved i.e. proof that they were

on the “main line” of western literary tradition, good boys not strays. Scott Fitzgerald in The Beautiful and the Damned, models Gloria after Marcela in the tale within a tale from Don Quixote of “Grisostomo” the lovelorn, scholarly “goatherd”. The great beauty parades herself among the lads but is unavailable for commitment or consummation driving the lads crazy with unrequited love and jealousy, lust and suicide.

31. 7-29-09 Art

I do not call the art politburo every morning to get marching orders for my painting. I'll try not to fall victim to the narratives of Clement Greenberg on flatness or John Hughes on painterly painting or Arthur Danto on irony, social issues, minimalism, gesture etc. I try not to paint dumb or to fall into easy traps of seduction of line, color, tone, composition yet I don't want to deny myself the pleasure of exploring what may be part of an archaic canon but not yet part of my own history of experience. I want to know the six hundred year history and make use of at least some of the great inventions of western painting in the service of my exploration. Perhaps by now I have internalized the politburo - no need to call.

32. 7-26-09 Art

All painting is narrative: Giotto, Titian, Bourgeois, Braque, Pollock, Mondrian. All paintings tell a story. Mondrian tells the story of the dynamic grid, Ellsworth Kelly, the story of the big, green shape. Pollock - the story of the drip. One can read as much about the artist's personality and the art of the era during which they worked as from “realistic” work, perhaps more. If you are literate in the language of paint, you understand that each painter narrates his / her own story.

33. 2-14-10

Art is not often painting anymore, very little painting is currently considered to be art. After Duchamp and Warhol, painting has been shunted to the back of the line. Painting is a very tough arena for art innovations given that art demands that every artist re-conceive art itself. All trained artists know that this is the requirement - to re-define art. The idea pool has pretty much been drained. If the idea of narrative easel painting was operative for four hundred years maybe some of the ideas of the last fifty years could support a life longer than that of a mayfly.

34.

Ground squirrels run up and down the freeway near my home. They remind me of humanity running up and down here and there just inches away from total fucking oblivion. It is not uncommon for one of these squirrels to run sideways to unfortunate results. Picasso is like the art squirrel who ran to the median in the middle of the night and entices others to give it a shot. The art world of the twentieth century is a fur-lined highway.

35.

As a cloud of interstellar dust is the birthplace of a star, so the home is the birthplace of ideas about the nature of the human heart for a mental health professional. Study as one might, you will be hard-pressed to understand anything of the human heart that you did not encounter in your own home as a child, however, if the only things you learned at home were love, forgiveness, charity, generosity and humor then you will do fine in your work. Perhaps it is best if one does not know too much of the dark side when counseling others about the mechanics of light.

36.

Donald Barthelme and Matisse were both caught in the intellectual / emotional gravitational field of a true believer. It was Paul Signac with Matisse and Donald senior for Barthelme. There is only one way to reach escape velocity from a true believer and that is to become the avante- garde. One must trump the reigning spokesman or the most recent purveyor of the big thing to gamble on being the next big thing yourself. This is an existential great leap. Both Donald Barthelme and Henri Matisse were successful in their leaping by any measure.

37.

Matisse and Picasso were never equals. Matisse was taking arrows for the avante- garde for ten years before Pablo arrived in Paris. Matisse was the pioneer of Modern painting, the Davy Crockett, the mountain man. Given Picasso's innate skittishness manifest in his abandonment of Cubism during the first world war due to its connection to things German (Chandelier -Picasso's dealer was German) Picasso had included German signs in his work (KUB - bullion cubes), it is unlikely that he would have ever transcended his Lautrec bravura and soulful narrative tendencies. It was due to the bold innovations of Matisse's Fauves that Picasso was pressured to conceive a commensurate response to Cezanne manifest as Cubism. Remember, it was Gertrude Stein, who did not like Matisse because he would not kiss her ass at her little soirees which he avoided, who recorded and promulgated Matisse's unfortunate remark about his only ambition being to create paintings that make hardworking bourgeoisie comfortable. Paintings like an easy chair. Matisse made this remark in jest after being the wild child of Paris for a decade and at a time that his reputation as a leader of Parisian art circles was secure. Picasso should not be spoken about in the same breath as Matisse. He was a follower of Matisse not an equal.

38.

Turn the soil in academia. Let the fields of learning lie fallow for five years allowing a life-affirming restoration of purpose. Send everyone on a five year sabbatical, all academic careers are suspended on the same day. All academics under fifty are drafted into the military. Make history, create an historic purge in our institutions of higher learning. Give this great event a cool name: "The Great Void" or simply "The Void" or "The Gap" or "Macys"

39.

When I put single peanuts on the top fence rail outside my window the squirrels snatch them up immediately. When I put a whole pile on the fence they become skittish.

They run up then back away then run up and sniff and back away then they proceed to snatch one. Are all animals afraid of too much of a good thing. Is this why humans are afraid of bliss? It is simply too good to be true that we have access to this state of mind at most times.

40.

Rather than suggest that Napoleon was the first postmodernist (note his multivalent simultaneity on the battlefield) let's say that the spirit of postmodernism has been with us for five thousand years. It is simply that we elected to acknowledge it in 1912 in the way that we acknowledged the full humanity of black people in America with the sixteenth amendment (slave emancipation) in 1864.

41

Ingres management:

“Drawing is the probity of art” Jean Dominique Ingres

“Drawing don't mean jack-doodly squat in art” Paul Cezanne

Ingres is often mistaken for being a great draughtsman, almost always by people who write about art, not practitioners. Ingres was an intensely careful draughtsman but he was not a great one. Great draughtsmen have processed their fear. They are fearless and joyful in their mastery. Raphael, Daumier, Lautrec, Della Bella, Michaelangelo, Bernini and Rodin were great draughtsmen probably because drawing was secondary to their primary creative agenda. Ingres was a drawing fetishist. Great draughtsmen do not get consumed by line. They issue line unconsciously like a spider issues filament. It is second nature. One can always see fear in the drawn line if it is present and fear is all around the drawings of Ingres, preventing his work from rising to greatness. Great draughting is sensuous, generous and accurate. It captures sublime bliss and transcendent soul-power.

42.

Robert Venturi dropped a theoretical blockbuster of a bomb onto the landscape of modern architecture in 1966 with his book Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. Crafting his own oeuvre in the following decades must have been like Thomas Paine sitting in the Virginia legislature for decades after his “Give me liberty or give me death” speech.

43.

A young artist is like an unfertilized egg that is approached by 100,000 ideas. When one of these ideas results in positive public response, a little fame and fortune then the artist / egg has been penetrated / fertilized and all subsequent sperm/ idea flow is deflected to allow the nurture / exploitation of the workable idea. Great artists have a capacity for more than a single fertilizing event.

44.

Joseph Stalin saved Norman Rockwell's career by sacrificing 6,000,000 Russian soldiers for the allied war effort against Hitler. If Stalin had not exhausted the German army on the Eastern front, America would have lost “The Greatest Generation” in a European

meat grinder of towering scale bringing sadness, loss and widespread gloom to the postwar American landscape.

45.

Poland is a nation that has historically suffered from the national trait of egomania more than most. None of its princes would relinquish power to a monarch during the age of political consolidation that resulted in the emergence of Britain, France and the Austro-Hungarian as powerful political hierarchies that allowed united force in times of war.

46.

Composition is a great enriching element to all painting. So much painting of the past century has a single central motif. This is boring. Too many painters are satisfied with a single narrow seduction in the center of their canvas or non-hierarchical democratizations of the picture plane of Jackson Pollock, de Kooning, Twombly.

47.

The hi-hat and brushes ruined countless jazz recordings between 1950 and 1980. This sound is high-pitched static like ten million invisible insects.

48.

Bad drawing by educated avante-garde artists is a sign of homage to Cezanne. Like a population of Spaniards who developed a lisp so their youthful handicapped king would not feel damaged. Great draughtsmen / women have been hiding their gifts since 1905. It has simply not been cool to be sublime on this variable but most artists with the gift will go through a brief phase demonstrating their mastery and then drink the Kool Aid and klunk it up.

49.

How many artists have we lost to petroleum vapors. Donald Barthelme was always painting his apartments with white paint (lead in his day). Matisse worked in oils in poorly ventilated apartments throughout his career ruining his immune system.

50.

Might we learn as much about the cosmos by watching an egg white disperse in a pan of boiling water as with billion dollar space probes?

51.

Rock and Roll is a distillation of Fascism. The viciously insistent 4/4 beat, the small palette of rhythms and chord progressions. A history of rock band politics from myriad garages to the vast arenas of the West would reveal scenes that would make Napoleon, Mussolini and Stalin appear as benevolent as Mr. Rogers. It is ironic that this is the music embraced by the boomer generation to symbolize freedom, risk-taking, and rebellion.

52.

Roger Angel anoints Donald Barthelme as the reigning fiction- meister of The new Yorker in the late sixties and American literature swerves toward a surreal, soulful preciousness. Risk-taking abounds. In 1980 The New Yorker swerves again, more like a stylistic spin-out when Gordon Lish edits Raymond Carver setting off a stampede of literary minimalism. Who cares? After forty five years with the New Yorker I'm leaning more toward Texas Monthly for my fix of superb writing, compelling features, humor and all around magazine entertainment.

53.

Novelist Thomas McGuane got caught in the crossfire of this New Yorker turf war between Angel and Lish. Up until the late seventies McGuane's novels "The Sporting Club" "Bushwhacked Piano" had created a sensation. McGuane captured a counterculture zeitgeist tapped by Donald Barthelme and Sam Shepard. McGuane was reviewed everywhere as the next big thing of American letters. Praise was showered on his work from the most prestigious publications - dozens of excellent reviews then the big shift at The New Yorker from Donald Barthelme's epiphanies of the absurd to stark minimal realism and WHAM! McGuane's next novel Panama the finest of all of his novels and perhaps THE great American novel, gets trashed. He is knocked from his high wire by the spreading New Yorker chill that set the tune across the literary landscape. now chastised McGuane drinks the mandatory Karver Kool Aid, following up the scintillating brilliance of Panama with less inspired Carveresque contemporary cowboy stories, only recently, after a thirty year interlude, recovering his early brilliance in his short stories Gallatin Canyon. Carver was used as a weapon by Gish who was battling Angel in the captain's tower. Any one of a dozen writers may have served his purpose. Carver's shyness and drinking problem must have made him appear pliable. Sad to see a great writer like McGuane get burned in the chaos of this New York paradigm juke.

54.

Gordon Lish was as important to Raymond Carver's success as Maxwell Perkins was for Thomas Wolfe. Lish was the "Fifth Beatle" for Carver. Would anyone suggest that we return to "Sergeant Pepper" and edit out the George Martin influence?

55.

Carver - Carved up postmodern fiction. I've known a LeMessurier who measured, a Kammerer who photographed. Do people's names sometimes give them career ideas? Richard Ford crosses rivers of emotion. Mary Karr drives through desperation arriving at redemption. Stephen King rules with benign good humor and humility.

56.

Cezanne was the Kool Aid of twentieth century art - If you get near it - you drink it.

57.

Most artists are making souvenirs past age thirty.

58. 10-26-09 Psychology - Chosen Child

How might one account for an adult who fails to leave home, fails to develop a strong will, forms a smothering bond with one's mother and lives with and cares for her until her death? This child is chosen from among his / her siblings. At an early age the parents commence their corrosive gradual erosion of this child's self esteem so that during the age of individuation, adolescence, this child remains psychically attached, always seeking approval that is always withheld. This is a conscious or unconscious strategy to ensure a caregiver in old age for the parent(s). Husband and wife collude on this culling strategy and enable one another in their project to dissolve the integration of the personality of the chosen child. This child has been known to murder its parents in order to gain psychic freedom.

59. 10-2-09 Relationships

We didn't break up because you had difficulty ever telling the truth but because your veneer became implausible.

60. 8-19-09 Relationships

Betty is a single woman of fifty five. She is an art dealer. She will only pursue people (lovers, artists, business associates) who are fully developed and possess mature reputations. Betty is not interested in seeds, pollen, acorns or potential of any sort. She has no time for potential and no time to lose.

61. 2-13-10 Quotation - F. Scott Fitzgerald on dieticians

"They have made a great progress in the last few years. They know pretty definitely that dichloride of mercury or arsenic in the right doses will kill you and that food should probably be eaten rather than taken in gas form or over the radio."

62. 2-13-10 Psychology

What is it about people who refer to themselves as "mindful" that makes them appear to be in a stupor.

63. 2-13-10 Psychology

If it feels good, don't do it. Choose the most physically painful / uncomfortable alternative for any action. If your choice is to read a book or walk twelve miles with weights then start walking. If it tastes good - don't eat it. If it smells good, don't say hello. If it sounds good - change the channel. Pleasure equals danger and or waste ninety eight percent of the time. Don't choose the pleasurable for yourself. Let pleasure follow from your hard choices as relief. To choose pleasure is to short circuit pleasure itself. You don't choose it - it chooses you.

64. 11-25-09 Pop culture - Cars

It seems unusual that a major U.S. car manufacturer would try to sell cars by naming a model after a devastated native American tribe - the Cherokees as in Jeep Cherokee.

This tribe was driven from their federally designated tribal land in Georgia in 1830 by whites in the midst of a gold rush. The state of Georgia annexed Cherokee land to adjoining counties. This dislocation is called "The Trail of Tears" Where is the sex appeal in this name? Is the Jeep model nomenclature team trying to piggyback on Cher's pop song "Cherokee People"? CHER-o-kee. Is it that the name conjures brave native warriors and their tribal mojo that might turn out to be transferable to a suburban yuppie family? It is that Cherokee sounds like Cherry Key. Buy this vehicle and get laid by a virgin. Perhaps all of the above - whoop it up Jeepers.

65. 11-29-09 Law - The U.S. Supreme Court is like a super-saturated chemical solution - drop in some additional substance - a case - and a crystal of multi-faceted opinion coalesces. Federal jurisprudence is like a pot of fondue cheese heated up and ready to congeal around the crouton of a legal issue.

66. 11-30-09 Law - While shedding no tears for big, bad American corporations but how was (then U.S. Senator future U.S. Supreme Court justice) Hugo Black allowed in 1938 to pursue his inquisitions given corporate immunity enabled by Dartmouth v Woodward (1819 - Marshall Court) not to mention the Fifth (self incrimination) and Fourteenth Amendment (due process) protections. Senator Black ran these inquiries like Stalin's show trials happening concurrently (great minds think alike). Senator Black treated his victims as though they had no constitutional rights whatsoever: freedom from search and seizure, right to a fair trial. In these inquisitions Hugo Black violated the "most important right of all" - Louis D. Brandeis - the right to be left alone.

67. 11-25-09 Law - During the twentieth century the following realms of human endeavor have come to grips with the epochal paradigm shift of 1912 (locus 1895-1920): Physics, painting, music, dance, psychology, mathematics, astronomy, literature and architecture. They have all experienced major revolutions incorporating the un-pinned station point that released ambiguity, uncertainty, intuition, the primitive and all manner of non-linear, contra-logical thinking that signaled the loss of primacy of The Enlightenment Project. A project characterized by Newtonian physics, tonal music, rational logic, deductive reasoning and hierarchical notions of organizing thought and measuring the world. We are now standing impatiently as the globe over-populates and over-heats and economies crumble in archaic eighteenth century manifestations, waiting for our legal system to respond to our global emergency. The U.S. Constitution and the grand wormy juridical edifice it created must get with the twenty-first century program. Our legal system has not changed in principal since its formulation in 1789. Many features have their roots in the medieval. The U.S. legal system stands wobbling, exhausted and incapable of responding to our current needs. It is now time to re-think the U.S. Constitution and the entire body of Constitutional law, philosophy and legal precedent using quantum logic - the logic of Einstein and Picasso, Schoenberg, Freud and Wright. It is time to blow the soot and cobwebs out of every corner of our laws from edifice to foundation down to the compacted cultural backfill on which the block stands. We have banks of supercomputers waiting to be re-assigned from predicting weather patterns to re-thinking our laws. We can begin by separating the corporation

from its rights as an individual. The Dartmouth v Woodward decision of 1819 was dead on arrival and is due for re-consideration. It is time to re-define the corporation as an entity that must account for its total social / carbon footprint. To serve is to rule!

68. 11-23-09 Law - John Marshall - a psychohistory

1. Held women in inordinately high esteem that devolved into a patronizing attitude considering women untouchable from their pedestal.
2. He suffered from PTSD from Revolutionary War battle experience and turned to alcohol to calm the psychic effects. How did this drinking (every night for thirty years!) effect his judicial decisions that are now the foundations of our way of life?
3. In marrying his wife Polly when she was only thirteen years old he prevented her from experiencing her adolescence. She went from childhood directly to motherhood causing her a lifetime of mental disorders.
4. His sons failed to thrive intellectually or economically, perhaps due to emotional damage caused by: a. a remote, neurotic mother b. absent, patronizing, alcoholic father.

This is altogether too mean! John Marshall was a humble, self-effacing man, a great thinker and an all-around very nice, very hardworking person, loved and respected by all who knew him. He was a high-functioning drunk with charisma. He was an American patriot, a founding father for God's sake! He was just another privileged, ultra-ambitious mid-level Virginia aristocrat - an entitled white guy with a silver tongue, a lust for property and street cred as a battle-hardened veteran. It is unfair to judge a man from a place so far removed from his milieu. Perhaps, but this man's decisions negatively effect every person on Earth now. Thanks to John Marshall, corporations are not accountable for their negative effects on a particular community - they have constitutional immunity due to Marshall's interpretation of the contracts clause in the U.S. Constitution. If it is unfair to judge a man in retrospect then it is unfair for his decisions to control so many important aspects of our lives today - fair play. Judgment works both ways. If I can't judge him then he can't judge me. Let's re-examine both ends of the matter.

We now hold our laws, from yesterday's precedent to the bedrock decisions and Constitution itself as sacrosanct as they dominate / stifle our culture. There must be a procedure initiated to review all juridical precedent at all levels. Every other walk of life has submitted to the re-vitalizing scarification of its conceptual landscape during the twentieth century. The law shall not escape. The time has come to empower a legal Picasso or Einstein thus launching an army of legal sleuths, theorists, students, and practitioners to bring the law into the twenty-first century. As it is currently practiced, the law, through our state and federal legislatures and current proceedings is like growing more and more branches and leaves on an old oak tree. This object has reached its capacity and will soon topple. All things on earth: bricks, mortar, trees and storms have a life cycle. If the dawdling turtle of our cultural menagerie, architecture, can swallow the pill of Postmodernism then so can the law.

69. 2-11-10 Law - It was depressing to listen to Sonia Sotomayor's Senate confirmation hearings. She went to great lengths to convince her interrogators that she

would do nothing creative while on the Supreme Court. That she would adhere strictly to the body of precedent of American law. Everyone knows that a Supreme Court decision creates the reality of a law as much as an act of congress yet she had to deny that she would ever think that she was doing anything other than carrying out the spirit of the laws passed by her esteemed inquisitors. Is the law immune and isolated from creativity at its highest levels? Our legal system is crying for substantive new ideas. Sadly, a supreme court judge, the most powerful player in our legal system, is like a musician in a symphony orchestra. They read the notes and play the tune. They are valued for their subtle, knowing interpretation of music created by others. The musician doesn't compose the notes - the judges claim that they are not making the law. Musical composition is risky and messy and full of passion, instinct, ambiguity, uncertainty as is law-making. Aaron Burr once said: "The law is anything that is forcefully asserted and reasonably maintained." Supreme Court justice Sotomayor claimed over and over again during her confirmation hearings that she does not make the law - she doth protest too much.

70. 11-24-09 Law - Johnson v McIntosh (Cherokee Indians in Georgia who occupied land that became subject to a major gold rush were taken from them and distributed to adjacent counties.

Fifteen years ago I invented a quasi-mystical fortune-telling procedure called Mohare' (Missouri -MO Hand-HA Reading-RE) As I tell it, a band of eastern European gypsies migrated to the Ozarks in 1842 and brought with them a timeless system for analyzing the capacity for an individual to harness universal energy. It proceeds from the profile of a person's left hand drawn on a paper tablecloth with their index finger pointing to magnetic north. From the outline, I proceed to draw the centerlines of each finger, tangent lines to each interstice between fingers and various radiating -generating lines as if I were analyzing the floor plan of a work of architecture. Colored pens are optional but very effective. Once the lines are drawn, I begin to see features: "Ah! A Johnson's Junction - this fortells a deep capacity for sympathy with your fellow man" Oh look! Connie's Confluence! - You possess a remarkable intuition regarding things artistic. Holy Kee-rist - I'm seeing a Filbert's Funicular - I've read about these for many years, they are famous in the literature (what fucking literature) but only two have ever been manifest in a hundred years and you have one! My point - A person can assert ANYTHING and if it is delivered with enthusiasm and conviction it can be maintained for at least the tail end of a candlelight dinner. This, according to Aaron Burr, is the nature of the law. Knowing this, perhaps it is time to examine our assertions. Mohare' can be elaborated into a system with ten thousand measurements of the hand and ten million interpretations and as long as people buy into the system it has heft, it has meaning. My god - I have an Arc of Ambrose! It says here in the Mohare' Bible (1,500 pages of diagrams and definitions) that I can sense infinite passion in others during the full moon. Why not? If my imaginary system allows real people to feel positive energy for even a moment then it is a real thing - it has temporal heft - it has changed one person's outlook, made them happier even if only for a minute.

In Johnson v McIntosh (1823) the U.S. Supreme court asserted that native Americans had no right to convey property, that the land they were living on was up to be grabbed by the

state of Georgia when it became valuable enough to take away. A very bald and bold assertion that was, backed up with regal and colonial precedent. Wow! Look at these two lines crossing in the middle of your palm, Inga's Intersection, this indicates that you will soon possess a great creative energy resulting in emotional bounty and financial prosperity. If you say so. If you just say it isn't so, the whole system evaporates. Our legal statutes have as much fundamental cosmic veracity as Missouri Hand Reading. It is time to re-define the meaning of many lines and arcs.

71. 11-23-09 Law - The Negro Seaman Act - 1822

The great divide between Jeffersonian republicans and Federalists regarding states rights. Federalist theory asserts that the U.S. Constitution reflects the will of the people not the states. The Republican "Compact" theory asserts that the national government is a compact between the states. How can one separate the states from "The People" they are the same carbon units. If one acknowledges the right of states to exist then one must see that they are also "The People". The same people represented by the federal government. If Jefferson is right - that the Constitution implies a compact, then one would send STATE representatives to Congress and all federal law would be generated by state legislators in their Federal role just as Supreme Court justices had state circuit court duty in addition to Federal responsibility. It was clear once the Constitution was adopted that the people of each state elected congressmen and senators to participate in national government directly. The armature for the compact theory was gone. That armature would have been that state representatives had a dual role - state as well as federal. If state and federal lawmakers were the same elected officials then the officials from South Carolina could have proposed a national law that disallowed blacks from embarking at ports and the Supreme Court would have struck it down as unconstitutional. South Carolina loses either in Federalist or strict Republican terms.

72. 11-23-09 Law - Dartmouth college v Woodward (1819)

Since when is a college a corporation? This was U.S. Supreme Court justice John Marshall's assertion. A college is a single entity in a fixed location with a mission to educate youth not to make a profit. To make such an assertion about the "individual" nature of a corporation in the guise of a small, remote school and then to use this bold and specious proposition to create legal immunity for all corporations allowing two hundred years of exploitation and abuse that resulted in the wholesale evacuation of American industry to Asia is a colossal mis-reading of the Constitution and a long-running miscarriage of justice. It is time to re-visit the Dartmouth College Case and in so doing to re-define the corporation in terms by which it can both be held accountable and thrive on our shores.

73. 11-24-09 Law - Marshall's Madeira and his court with "one voice"

Dissent during Marshall's tenure as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1801-1835) was resolved at the dinner table with copious amounts of wine supplied by the hogshead from Marshall who purchased it in one hundred gallon lots from Europe in order to sauce his brethren, to synchronize their minds on the weighty matters before the court. The justices all shared living quarters in a rooming house in Washington D.C. while court was in session. As young women living together will experience the

synchronization of their menstrual cycles, I wonder if the men of Marshall's court underwent an additional synchronization of testosterone due to their propinquity? Dissention on the court was not as acceptable during the Marshall era as it was later when dissensions of Brandeis, Black and many others became the law of the land in due time.

74. 11-23-09 Law

An unfair, raving and repetitive rant meant to launch a discussion not to disrespect an esteemed founding father - I actually like Marshall and admire him and acknowledge that he did a towering job at a vital time that could not have been improved upon by anyone. He was the perfect man for the job at the time and should be on some paper money of one of the more numerous denominations (swap him for Hammy on the ten) - We tend to hold our founding fathers as inviolable and this may not be conducive to our survival, economic and otherwise.

U.S. Supreme Court justice John Marshall married a thirteen year old girl, impregnated her immediately and kept her pregnant for years, depriving the child of her adolescence and eventually driving her mad. He purchased alcohol in one hundred gallon lots in order to intoxicate himself and his brethren during thirty years of Supreme Court deliberations during the early formative years of our government (1803-1830). He was a high-functioning alcoholic. Marshall suffered from Post traumatic stress syndrome from many hard-fought Revolutionary War battles. He harbored an unusual tendency to valorize, if not deify femininity. He saw the Federal Government as a bosomy, all-embracing woman who must be served, nurtured and aggrandized at all times on all matters. He greatly admired George Washington who got his marching orders from arch-Federalist Alexander Hamilton (strong central government). He coddled and patronized all Americans as he coddled his young wife. His s-mothering rulings have hovered over American financial, legal, domestic life like a pair of colossal butt cheeks issuing a relentless fecal drip onto the consciousness and fortunes of all citizens of the United States. It is time to throw the flaccid, now decayed, flesh of Marshall's rulings off of the face of our Constitution. It is time for a fresh look at a body of legal precedent (the legacy of the Marshall court) that holds fast and deep the prejudice and dissipating wisdom of the Enlightenment Project. It is time to revisit our glorious Constitution and interpret it in the light of pressing contemporary exigencies.

75. 2-11-10 Law - timely nutrients

All growing things have different needs at different ages. Newborn mammals need milk. Later in life milk can become toxic if ingested at all. When concrete is fresh it needs moisture for thirty days to cure properly after that moisture is unnecessary. A tree needs new branches and leaves then after eighty years any further weight causes the tree to tip over in a strong wind. During the generation following the Revolutionary War the United States needed the jurisprudence of the Marshall Supreme Court in order to grow effectively, in order for commerce to thrive. Decisions that may have served a great purpose for one hundred fifty years may begin to have an opposite effect thereafter. How much of our foundational legal precedent is now doing more harm than good?

76. 11-23-09 Law - Hardships of individuals

John Marshall was always sensitive to the hardship of individuals who could not afford to

seek redress from distant courts. With this in mind he often settled cases within their own jurisdictions that might have been candidates for an appeal to a higher but distant court. Marshall's sensitivity to logistical and financial challenges of individuals seeking justice is belied by his creation of a powerful and impregnable (by states) federal government. In 2010, as has been the case, for two hundred years, the individual has no local recourse via a state legislature or state court to the mandates of the federal government. This is not democracy. The federal government has made itself a remote and unfathomable hog, impenetrable even by a new president who makes a commitment to two hundred twenty million people for change. Our only pipeline to John Marshall's now colossal and omnipotent federal government is our vote for president and his immediate and continuing emasculation is proof that democracy in the United States is dead. Stick a fork in it - it's over. American citizens have become a viral colony that is harvested by corporate and financial entities from birth to death - revolt now!

77. 11-22-09 Law - McCulloch v Maryland

The U.S. Supreme Court opens the door to consolidation and growth of the federal government serving a useful function for a young republic but for the past fifty years our gargantuan government has relinquished its power to globally controlled financial institutions that have gutted the American middle class. The logic, traced back to McCulloch v Maryland has resulted in the shift of industry to Asia and with the shift, our national solvency. Between the Dartmouth College case and McCulloch v Maryland Marshall planted the seeds for the undermining of a mature nation which, in 2010 lies in doldrums, eviscerated, with its industry and its dollars gone to China and its middle class gone to hell. So those Republican alarmists Jefferson, Roane and the legislature of Virginia are proven prescient.

78. 7-29-09 Law - Spousal equity

If wives get one half of their husband's net worth in big divorces even though they were not working in the executive office at GM or GE because they are on the home front enabling the success of their mate via their management of the domestic scene, perhaps they should also share the ignominy and prison time for minding the home front when hubby is robbing millions from his clients.

79. 2-12-10 Law musings - Louis D. Brandeis

Upon reading the towering biography of Louis Brandeis by Melvin Urofsky -Brandeis and Groucho Marx: the yin and yang of Jewish public figures during the nineteen thirties.

Brandeis expanded the purview of courtroom proceedings to admit the primary element of all law - the fact having equal footing with legal theory and precedent. If Chief Justice John Marshall's signal contribution to the law is his foundational decisions standing as towering pines then the Brandeis contribution is the celebration of the fact - the pollen. Truth is in the details.

80. 2-12-10 Law musings

Law is congealed politics. John Marshal made a great effort to separate law and politics. They are the same stuff as history is often congealed gossip.

81

American Jurisprudence is like a three foot high stack of toothpicks balancing on top of a crème Brule with the brittle sugary crust as the Constitution and the goop beneath being centuries of English common law.

82. 12-4-09 Law Musings

Joel Osteen, Rick Warren and Tony Robbins speak to over 100,000 people a month eleven months a year but their combined cultural heft is miniscule compared to that of a few paragraphs of text written by a dissenting U.S. Supreme Court judge. This judge can easily effect the lives of every citizen in the country for two hundred years.

83. 12-14-09 Law Musings

Now is the time to spring clean our body of federal law as one would clean an inherited house that contained musty relics and residue from bygone times. Clean house top to bottom. Begin with a twenty-first century Constitutional Convention, retaking our vows, re-measuring our definition and commitment to our founding principles taking nothing for granted. Review and revise the five foundation cases of the U.S. Supreme Court: Dartmouth v Woodward, Marbury v Madison, McCulloch v Maryland, Fletcher v Peck, Martin v hunter's Lessee. Review and revise ten thousand cases that evolved from these five. Scrub the woodwork.

84. 12-18-10 The NPR stutter

Why do so many NPR moderators and guests stutter. Terry Gross and Michael Krasny have habitual stutters that appear to be affected not organic speech defects. These two set the stylistic keynote for many of their radio colleagues and guests often mimic this verbal oddity. It is a weird, unsettling quirk. What purpose might it serve? Does it divide straight announcers from gay? Is the stutter a signifier of urgent, penetrating intelligence? Does it create a sense that the speaker is such a rapid-fire thinker that their thoughts are piling up faster than their mortal tongues can dispatch them over the airwaves? The NPR stutter is annoying and sets a poor example to young people. Sadly, perhaps the NPR stutter will eventually dominate uber-educated discourse of our elite as a signifier of all things P.C. and liberal. Maybe it is simply evidence of the impatient thrill of being a radio personality, a verbal marker of unbridled enthusiasm and good cheer. I-I-I-I just can't figure it out.

85. 11-26-09 - KKK

Curious about possible KKK involvement in channeling black "convicts" rounded up throughout the former Confederate states into United States Steel Corporation's mining and steel-making operations in Alabama 1925-1944

86.

Future U.S. Supreme Court justice Hugo Black joined the Robert E. Lee KKK Klavern No. 1 at dusk on September 11, 1923. There were 1,750 initiates and 25,000 spectators

that night. But this was a time when all white protestant males were joining the Klan.

87. 8-1-09 Higher Education

Our universities have become powerful agents of the two-tier social order: the well educated, prosperous and optimistic haves and everyone else. During the latter half of the twentieth century our colleges and universities fueled a thriving middle class that has since been devastated by job loss to China and India and the widespread selling down the river of the bulk of hardworking Americans. Our institutions now produce candidates for the elite. American society is now more divided between rich and poor than Ancien Regime France just prior to the French Revolution. This is not good.

88. 10-18-09 Slavery

The north did indeed want to free blacks and were willing to fight the Civil War to do it but not necessarily to make blacks any better off but, as it turned out, to free up a very large, lucrative and mobile labor pool. Once the slaves were free of southern aristocratic plantation owners the men could be delivered into northern owned steel, limestone, timber and real estate development operations (road building) throughout the South via sheriffs, judges, labor brokers. The “freed” black was still enslaved in the south but now working for Northern owned interests. This was a classic Marxian re-distribution of an inefficient labor force. Such economy-based redistributions are at the root of all revolutions according to Marxist theory.

See: Slavery By Another Name - Blackmun

89. The slaves were freed only to re-distribute a workforce from one group of white capitalists to another, from an inefficient mode, agriculture to a modern mode, industry. This was a big weenie for blacks. They were not really free after the Civil War. The lame policies of reconstruction combined with backward Supreme Court decisions ensured their oppression for another one hundred years.

90. 10-18-09 War

Great wars are primarily culling exercises that are superficially motivated by politics, social issues, economics. The U.S. Civil War, World Wars One and Two, the war in the Philippines 1909-1930. These wars occurred to thin the ranks of humans on earth.

91. 2-12-10

That human life on earth may be a virus suffered by the planet and notions of socio-political reform are akin to creating a healthier, happier Ebola virus.

92. 11-29-09 Question

Did the big three American insurance companies: Equitable, Prudential and New York Life act as banks loaning money to steel, rail, coal interests in order to create debt that was repaid by intermittent work stoppages that invalidated worker's insurance policies between 1880-1920? Industrial insurance for laborers was the largest profit center for these companies. Did the titans of the insurance and steel industries collude knowing

they would devastate their own workers and their families? Just asking. Remember that all of this corporate - industrial license to oppress was directly enabled by John Marshall's ruling in the Dartmouth College Case.

93. 12-4-09

I am perplexed by our national religion of appearing to be busy. Our bankers, insurance executives, congressman, senators and mortgage brokers were filling their lives with "New York Minutes" for a decade while undermining our economy. We would have been better served by an honest group of casual and copacetic lingerers who slowly but constructively went about their daily business with breaks each evening for dinner with their families and a few hours of television. Slow down, pay attention, be mindful - the bum's rush is over. Slow down, don't be a bum. Only bums rush.

94.

During my life two things have occurred that suggest the Mafia is the avante-garde for our banking - financial services industries. In 1963 a New York mobster was convicted for loan-sharking. He charged 13% interest on his loans. During the early 1970s, in Arizona, the mob was involved in packaging questionable real estate mortgages into securities that were sold to investors around the world. This operation continued for five years then collapsed. The mobsters were accused of land fraud. Investors lost seventy million dollars. There were federal investigations and murders. Today banks charge 22% interest on credit cards and the securitization of questionable real estate by an army of businessmen and politicians has cost us trillions.

95. 12-3-09 Corporate

You can learn a lot about a corporation's core beliefs in democracy by examining the toilet paper dispensers in their facility restrooms. McDonalds has a dispenser the size of a spare tire in a stainless steel armor case, the t.p. is three inches wide, narrower than standard, and a person hits their knuckles on the floor when trying to pull off more than nine inches at a time. It is very biodegradable so one needs about twelve yards of the stuff at a time. McDonalds does not trust me and it doesn't care if its employees struggle to get enough toilet paper to wipe their butts clean - a health hazard.

96. 10-27-09 Corporate Regulation

Assign each of our state universities an industry to monitor and inspire with notions of honesty, sustainability, accountability, research and development. All professors and students participate in watch-dogging as well as inspiring. This is the white-on-rice approach. Rather than the precarious industry insider or collusive government regulator as monitor all oversight is by enthusiastic, optimistic, forward thinking and independent persons. Assignments can be distributed as follows with the deck being re-shuffled every five years:

University of Washington - Coal and Gas

University of California - Food Processing

Berkeley - High fructose corn syrup

UCLA - breakfast cereal
Santa Barbara - Meat and poultry
Irvine - Dairy
UC San Diego - desserts and snacks
Florida State - Solar Energy
Kansas State - Banking
University of Pennsylvania - Banking
Boise State - Railroads
University of Minnesota - Public Utilities

12-12-09 Twenty Year Plan (the past twenty years)

A master plan to screw Americans eleven ways from Sunday:

1. The Bum's Rush - Financial leaders convincing politicians to hurry hurry hurry the trillion dollar bailout. No time! No time! See corollary bum's rush into terror wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
2. Fatten Us Up - Produce high fructose, high fat, high salt processed food and sell it ubiquitously and cheap.
3. Drug Us into a Stupor: Using bovine pharmaceuticals as a drug delivery system to humans making us sleepy and cranky.
4. Invite too many to the real estate party. Invite all working Americans who can fog a mirror to own a home. Re-structure government regulation and banking, finance and mortgage industries to facilitate this massive ruse. Fleece a generation of lower-middle class Americans of every penny they can beg, borrow, steal for three or four years then take their homes away and sell them to another population of dreamers. Repeat as required until an entire class of American citizens has been devastated, their American dream shattered. Note that these offending institutions are publicly owned and controlled by a large percentage of foreign capital i.e. people who don't give a rat's ass about the American people.
5. Allow huge agribusiness enterprises (also publicly owned - see above) to buy up small farms all across America sending small farmers into the now marginal industrial sector.
6. Allow gargantuan box retail enterprises to collude with the Chinese to drive all locally-owned hardware stores, household goods stores out of business.
7. Allow / encourage white collar job drain to India
8. Allow banks to charge phenomenal interest and banking fees.
9. Allow health care conglomerates to assign themselves a middleman role in health care delivery draining billions of dollars away from patients and doctors
10. Privatization of water - the sale of local utilities to foreign financial entities.
11. Create an all-volunteer military that victimizes a lower class - the same class that is getting reamed by banks.

Of the people, by the people for the people? Run that by me again.

Americans are no longer comfortable with its royal court, the New York financial industry, that dominates our elected representatives.

97. 12-4-09 Civil Engineering

It is time for a very large scale WPA style civil engineering project to get the heartland and the rest of us back on our feet. Let's turn Indiana into our sixth great lake and connect this lake to the rapidly diminishing Ogala aquifer that lies beneath the Great Plains states. What to do with the farmers and small town residents? Swap them their soon to be submerged land for lakefront property. There will be thousands of new miles of this valuable real estate. The actual edge of Lake Letterman will be located ten miles from adjacent borders. Indianapolis will become an island of sorts connected by spokes that form the five major highways into surrounding states. Lafayette / Purdue may lobby for island status but it is not likely to be granted. This project will employ all willing workers on the North American continent for ten years: blue collar, white collar, no collar. Lake Letterman will become a thriving tourist destination for vacationers and shoppers from around the world with direct flights from Asia and the Middle East. Our new great lake will replace rust-belt industry with global scale recreation opportunity. "Make no little plans" - Daniel Burnham

98. 7-24-09 Politics

If you took every adult in the United States and put them in a big blender and turned it to puree, the substance you would draw off would be pure Dick Cheney (the foam would be Sarah Palin) Dick Cheney rose to prominence as the former most influential individual in the country for at least eight years. He is the embodiment of all Americans including the populous silent majority - the warm, dark matter, along with all of the pretty people we see on television, in the movies and in glossy magazines. If you are uncomfortable with this you might stop using petroleum products ie stop being an American. You say Cheney is mean spirited? The most friendly of us are a single degree of separation from violence, meanness and greed. Conservatives are not as shy about this as liberals.

99. 11-29-09 History - Russia

Stalin didn't give a damn about communism. Some considered him a double-agent for the Czar. He kept silent about his true allegiance and controlled the communist party as a grand infiltrator. He was alarmed when party hardliners began to complain about his dedication to communist principles. Stalin killed the party leadership during his purge of 1938. When Senator Joseph McCarthy began harassing communists in the U.S. in the early nineteen fifties, Stalin's communists had been dead for fifteen years.

100. 12-6-09 Art

The terms artist and painter are not synonymous. The word artist implies innovation, exploration and a conscious effort to extend the boundary of art. Paul Cezanne was the last painter who was also an artist who used nature as a direct source of inspiration. From the Fauvists: Matisse, Derain and Vlaminck, who directly followed late Cezanne during the first decade of the twentieth century to the present, all painting as art ie painting in the lead in defining what art is in its time, has looked only at other painting or into the psyche for inspiration not out into the landscape. Very little painting

of the past seventy five years can even be considered art i.e. extending the range of the avante garde. Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol and Richard Prince perhaps - no one else. Now that painting has reached a dead end (see celebrations of the paintings of Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, John Currin, Robert Mangold, Frank Stella and countless others, all others) perhaps it is time to direct observation and interpretation of nature for a painting that aspires to the status of art. It is time to return to the source. The oeuvre has been exhausted.

101. 7-02-09 Art

The generation of young artists in Paris from 1900 to World War One looked at Cezanne's late painting as if it were nature itself, thus the work of the Fauves, Cubists, Futurists, Purists et al was already a meta-art, an art about art rather than art about nature or even historical ideas or mythological motifs. From Matisse onward through the twentieth century painting is about other painting. In mathematical terms, Cezanne's late work is the first derivative of nature and Cubism is the second derivative of nature.

102. 12-9-09 Art

It is strange to attempt to institutionalize the avante- garde in university studio art programs knowing that a feature of any avante garde is the loss of the great majority of its members to random exploration that, however valiant, intelligent and well-meaning, leads to penury, mental illness and suicide (see La Boheme). An institutionalized avante garde is a gross contradiction of terms. Our university art programs create yet another cluster of anemic, static and claustrophobic academic artworks as lifeless as those that launched the Impressionist/ Fauvist /Cubist revolution against the nineteenth century French academy. All cultures require an avante- garde for the new ideas that will save it from itself. It is counter-productive of the important social purpose of the avante- garde to homogenize its purpose, program, agenda in a university art department. Academic art is all heading in the same direction. The jargon has become uniform. Language directs the exploration. The current shared dogma celebrates non-narrative, non object oriented, conceptual, gender inspired work that is pale, wan and always doctrinaire. Duchamp wrote out the marching orders in 1920 and so it is. This art is no fun to look at. It is no fun to think about. It all smacks of faux enlightened laziness of mind and muscle. It is as empty as the soupiest, graviest nineteenth century Beaux arts historical narrative extravaganza. The art of today is produced hermetically at a computer or in a studio or factory as separated from nature as the precious polishers of the past.

103. 11-30-09 Art

Gertrude Stein is guilty of casting damaging aspersions upon two immensely worthy subjects neither of which deserved her snarky opprobrium. "Oakland, California - there is no there there" Oakland is one of the most beautiful cities in the world and if not for ever-so-precious San Francisco, it would be the jewel of the Bay and of the whole west coast. Stein's denigration of Matisse comparing him unfavorably to her little lap dog Picasso and her intentional mis-reading and mis-telling Matisse's remark that he simply wished to paint pictures that might add a little comfort to a bourgeois life. Picasso rode

into his exalted place in the art world on the coattails of firebrand Matisse who had been the stalking horse of modern painting while Picasso was painting pigeons under the watchful eye of his father. Matisse constructed an intellectual environment in the Paris art world that enabled Picasso and his bande to pursue their bold explorations. If not for the new territory opened by Matisse Picasso would have remained a stylistic magpie.

104. 11-30-09 Art

It can be said of ninety nine percent of all art that there is just not enough right with it. Perhaps it is finished but almost always stunted in conception and execution. A painting has the potential to be explosively powerful in its expressive range and in its sublimity entirely independent of the subject matter. See "Rain, Steam and Speed" by Turner or "Girl with a Shuttlecock" by Chardin. The subject matter in these two paintings is incidental to the highly resolved power emanating from the color harmony and composition both tuned to a fever pitch. Whereas Leon Golub or Robert Longo can paint men being tortured or falling through the sky, this work still elicits a muted esthetic/emotional response. These paintings lack resolution. There is not quite enough there there.

105. 11-23-09 Architecture

Two great architects: Thomas Jefferson and LeCorbusier had extended affairs with nubile young black women: Sally Hemmings and Josephine Baker respectively. How might Jefferson's affection / attraction to the vital earthiness, immediacy and power of the black soul have related to his unshakable belief in state's rights, in a restricted federal government? LeCorbusier's towering precursor and immediate influence Pablo Picasso had invented the art of the century: Cubism, by exploring the power of African tribal art. Picasso opened the door to the dark continent and Corbu walked in via Ms Baker. The Declaration of Independence and Constitution were the "Demoiselles d'Avignon" of global political innovation. Jefferson and Picasso: great inventors, synthesizers, enablers of lateral, right brain thought and innovation. One can sense Jefferson's towering frustration as John Marshall, over thirty four years as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, hammered away in his Madeira-soaked wisdom, the spirit of Jefferson's Declaration with his left-brain, Enlightenment logic that was more Sherlock Holmes than Picasso. Marshall has made us a nation of corporate slaves (see: Dartmouth College v Woodward, 1819) who, as we serve the protestant ethic of salvation through hard work, are gutted by our foreign owned financial institutions and sold down the river to China via Wal-Mart and Home Depot.

106. 7-29-09 Art

Painters of the Renaissance paradigm (1412-1900) fought the same battles in all of their work. These battles were for: 1. The center of focus 2. For pictorial space 3. For story line - the narrative. Modern art, in its swerve, has eliminated the center, flattened pictorial space and removed the story. Has some part of the baby been thrown out with this bathwater? Contemporary critics, teachers and curators clobber this infant each time it crawls back onto the scene - cruel. Time to lighten up. Architecture entertained its turning of the soil of modernist dogma in 1966 with Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction. The art world is still revolves around Duchamp, now a moldy old

worn out set of notions that were tired when Andy Warhol took them for a spin around the block to great effect.

107. 7-28-09 Art

All painting is episodic, illusory, narrative: Pollock, Rothko, deKooning, Newman and Kline were illustrating/ narrating Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg's theories. These painters were as much illustrators as Norman Rockwell or Ken Dallison simply for a narrower audience.

108. 6-20-09 Art

The hard edge in late twentieth century painting was the circling of the wagons of the marginally gifted against the born warriors - those with abundant natural talent whom they massacred for the most part though a few escaped: Oldenburg, Rivers, Dine, Johns, LeBrun, Liashkov, Praczukowski.

109. 6-30-09 Literature

F.Scott Fitzgerald taught young Americans how to flirt and kiss and play romantic games. Hemingway showed them how to hunt and kill animals and people. Which one of these writers would Americans deify? The killer, of course.

110. 6-29-09 Literature

"November rain had perversely stolen the day's last hour and pawned it with that ancient fence - the night" F. Scott Fitzgerald - The Beautiful and the Damned

"The nighttime wrote a check that daylight couldn't cash" Thomas McGuane - Panama

111. 6-29-09 Literature

After reading three novels by Ernest Hemingway (Sun, Farewell, Belt Holes) and four by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Paradise, Gatsby, Tender, Tycoon) Fitzgerald is stronger, deeper, far more subtle with more color, lyricism ie magic. Hemingway is a plodder in comparison. Hemingway gets boring often especially in Belt Holes. The Sun Also Rises is the finest of the three. This Side of Paradise is Fitzgerald's finest. Hemingway would have to stand on a stool to kiss Fitzgerald's ass. Sorry Gertrude Stein - I shit in your milk!

112.

In The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald is mimicking Hemingway's terse prose to ill effect. The feminine narrator just doesn't work.

113.

A writer is judged by their ability to tolerate a bliss state in which transcendent thought and spiritual emotion are reified into text. Fitzgerald's tolerance of this state of mind was far greater than Hemingway's tolerance of his own bliss. Hemingway may have had grace under pressure but the pressure of grace and its sublimity was too great for his constitution whereas Fitzgerald was a conduit throughout most of Paradise, much of Gatsby and considerable portions of Tender is the Night. Fitz had lost it by Tycoon to

that relentless Hemingway popular bandwagon and to alcohol. Protestants fear bliss and transcendence so Catholic Fitzgerald had to be dismissed as second fiddle to solid, stolid, down to earth Ernest.

114. 5-25-09 Art

The difference between fine art painting and illustration lies in the degree to which your imagination is engaged in order to close the gap of perceived meaning also the amount of time it takes to comprehend the artist's intention. Some work you may never fully understand. We all love Rembrandt because we think we get it immediately and then realize that we will never get it all.

115. 6-21-09 Art

Henri Matisse is underestimated by almost everyone and commonly viewed as Picasso's inferior when discussing paradigm shifting innovations in painting during the early years of the twentieth century. This is a shame and it is not at all accurate. This misconstrual comes from Gertrude Stein who bore a grudge toward Matisse for remaining socially, emotionally aloof from her and her cozy circle. One can easily assert that Matisse fully grasped and experimented with the paradigm-destroying features of Cezanne's late work: non-mimetic drawing, flattened, democratized picture plane, creating form with color, unpinned station point, simultaneity, warped linear perspective etc. Matisse's bold experiments with simultaneity occurred from 1901 through 1920 before his languid odalisques but for the first seven years of the century Matisse was bravely taking most of the arrows for the modern movement while Picasso was dallying in his lachrymose pastiche of Puvis de Chavannes (blue and Rose periods) waiting for the smoke to clear, waiting for the Indians to leave the building. Once the rabid fervor over modern painting calmed down to a mild, gut-churning roar, Picasso along with his wife Braque make their appearance with their cogent abstraction of all things late Cezanne - Cubism and carry all of the glory of bold, earth-shattering innovation to the army of young painters, sculptors and architects in Paris in 1910. Cubism is a shorthand for seven years of Matisse's experiments with Cezanne's innovations with some tribal motifs added for dramatic effect

It was Picasso's bande that included the greatest writers of the time, avante-garde pitchmen, Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Cocteau (later) who launched the myth that Picasso was the heavy lifter for twentieth century artistic innovation. This along with Henri Matisse's self-immolating remark about wanting to make "pictures for a tired working man to enjoy while stretched out on his sofa" - a remark made after ten years of fierce battle - who wouldn't want to rest up a bit. Picasso had a p.r. machine to expand the perception of his particular contributions and Matisse did not. The situation is similar to the settlement of the New England Western Addition (present day Ohio) during the early nineteenth century. The men who fought Indians, cut trees, surveyed the land, platted new townships i.e. those who did the brutal heavy, dangerous work went bankrupt allowing the following generation of speculators to make a killing. Matisse is the true pioneer of modern painting and Picasso is clearly a latecomer although a potent and important one. Abe Lincoln was a latecomer to Indiana but an effective member of the community. Cubism was simply easier to grasp, more transferable than the early oeuvre of Matisse and the Fauves. The foot soldiers of the Parisian avante-garde could traipse

through Picasso's studio and see all they needed in order to grasp Cezanne. Picasso and Braque's Cubism is Cezanne in a pill.

116. 6-21-09 Art

The epochal (500 year) paradigm shift of 1912 which affected all art, science and politics was a result black emancipation penetrating the lapsed Enlightenment project in Europe i.e. the U.S. Civil War, six hundred thousand white men and thousands of black men die in order to acknowledge a non-white culture as citizens. This potent event revitalized art and science that had been exhausted by the urban nightmare of nineteenth and early twentieth century labor abuse. How to explain the fifty year delay? It always takes Europeans at least one generation to absorb the astounding drama and forcefulness of the reifications of the American character. Declaration of Independence 1776 - French Revolution 1789. Picasso celebrates Lincoln in "Le Demoiselles d'Avignon"

117. 2-15-10 Music

"You either swing a band or you don't" Buddy Rich

118. 2-15-10 Literature

"Cezanne as a sense of his own commensurability, not only with the landscape but on the evidence of his self portraits - with 'the life operative' in himself" herewith the first authentic note of Beckett's mature, post humanist phase is struck." ??? on source of quote maybe Donald Barthelme. Samuel Beckett drinks the Cezanne Kool Aid and becomes a viable member of the twentieth century art club.

119. 7-26-10 Art

Painters who use the "what you see is what you get" approach to picture making (opaque paint - one shot - no glaze i.e. transparent effects) are missing many thrills of both space-making and color. They are denying the power of light to modulate paint as it is reflected from a light ground or from underlying colors.

120. 2-15-10 Architecture

Richard Meier is to LeCorbusier what Richard Diebenkorn is to Matisse - synecdochal. Both Meier and Diebenkorn made very successful careers of mere slivers of the work of their towering precursors.

121. 2-15-10 Architecture

LeCorbusier went to school on the architecture of the Vienna Secession, particularly the work of Hans Maria Olbrecht although Corbu professed a hatred of the work. Kill your sources like Frank Lloyd Wright did with the Turkish Pavilion at the 1893 Chicago worlds fair. This exhibition from Turkey is the granddaddy of all Prairie Houses.

122. 2-15-10 General

You can tell who gave their passionate all to a project. They are the ones who have fallen flat on their faces - bankrupt, emotionally exhausted, the others were some form of spectator, Johnny-come-lately pulling their punches and reaping the rewards due some

brave pioneer.

123. 7-27-09 Life

As there is the notion of positive and negative space in the visual arts, sculpture and architecture as well as music, one can look at life's problems, roadblocks, obstacles using the trope of positive/negative space. Instead of grappling with a perceived problem or person as a discreet object, look at the variety of space that abuts it, surrounds it - select a zone of abutting space for your attack, pursuit or attention. All matter is defined by its context. As you change one aspect of the context you are changing the nature of the original object / solid and as it changes you may find the new thing more accessible to your skills and pursuits.

124. 2-18-10 Book Notes

I spend an average of six weeks per book reading six and seven hundred page books all of the time. The following are highlights from each book.

Panama Canal - McCulloch - Ten thousand Frenchmen died of various tropical disease in an effort to build a Panama canal. The French effort ended ten years prior to the start of the American work. The Americans solved two problems that stymied the French: mosquitoes (they carried the diseases) and where to put the dirt (it kept getting in the way). The mosquito problem was solved by spraying a mist of petroleum onto every water surface in the country from lakes to tiny puddles below downspouts. The dirt / spoils problem was solved by Chief engineer of the Canal project, former railroad engineer John F. Stevens who spent the first year of his tenure in Panama, to the mystification of his supporters back home, building a railroad into the Panama hinterlands. It was rail cars that carried away the dirt and rock thus making the entire project feasible.

Brooklyn Bridge - McCulloch - Hundreds of sand hogs died of nitrogen narcosis also known as the bends, while working over one hundred feet below the surface of the water under massive wooden and steel caissons (think of a square pot upside down seventy five feet on a side). It was the bends that killed the principal designer of the bridge John Roebling. Building the Brooklyn Bridge was deadly work. Medical doctors were called in to try to help. They pronounced that work should proceed that nothing could be done.

Stalin as a Young Man - Simon Sebag Montfiore - Joseph Stalin was a published poet of significant stature as a teenager. Stalin robbed banks to send money to Lenin who used the funds to survive while planning the Russian Revolution. Because Stalin always found his way back to civilization after being sentenced to exile after conviction for crimes as a young man, this happened five times, it has been asserted that Stalin was working for the Czar's secret police and was never a Communist but a double agent. Stalin's home life as a boy was filled with violence and shame. He was regularly beaten by both parents. His mother bragged to villagers (to the chagrin of her husband) that her boy Joseph was not the child of her husband but of an itinerant carnival strong man who found her attractive.

Stalin's arm was crushed in a carriage accident as a young child and never healed. His destroyed arm prevented him from participating in sports. Stalin was sent to a seminary as an older teen where he was frequently punished for reading novels. He especially enjoyed Tolstoy, Hugo and Dostoyevsky.

Le Corbusier - A Biography - Nicholas Fox Weber - Le Corbusier had an older brother who was the family treasure. Corbu's mother made no effort to conceal that this brother was her favorite and would always be the center of her affection. Corbu tried until her death to impress her but to no avail. To his misfortune, the old bat almost outlived him. While swimming in the Mediterranean off the south coast of France, Corbu was run over by a large motor yacht. The propeller cut large swaths of flesh from Corbu's body starting at his head and running down along his trunk to his thigh. If not for nearby fisherman and some astute surgeons he would have surely died. I wonder if this trauma is the reason that Corbu's late work is so phenomenally fearless, bold, brutal, beautiful. His brain was rattled into greatness from the prop chop. One thinks of Corbu as perhaps a stuffy, Swiss protestant prude and looking at photos of him as a young man, there is reason for this. He had an extended affair with American expatriate singing / dancing star Josephine Baker and his wife was a salty, earthy jokester. Both of these women were anti-mom. Corbu's mother hated his wife. Corbu was an ardent Vichy collaborator who spent the course of the war in Vichy trying on many occasions to get the government to hire him for large public works - to no avail. If he had gotten any of this vigorously sought after work he would probably have been shot as a collaborator with the Nazis. As it turned out, he remained virtually anonymous. Philip Johnson, the famous American architect was my graduating class guest speaker at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He said that he saw himself as a prostitute and that architects should marry money. Le Corbusier was the godhead of architecture while I was a student. Architecture really tends to isolate itself from any politics other than its internecine squabbles which can be deadly.

Donald Barthelme - A Biography - Tracy Daugherty - When someone writes a seven hundred page book about someone I'm only vaguely aware of I'm intrigued. I bought this book and learned that Donald Barthelme was a literary innovator who helped re-direct American fiction along with a very small group of authors referred to as postmodernists for lack of a better term. This group includes John Barth, William Gass, Robert Coover and Thomas Pynchon. I felt an immediate connection with DB because his father was of the second generation of modern architects who considered the tenets of modernism a religion. In twentieth century architecture there is an indisputable godhead - Frank Lloyd Wright and a group of three major disciples, all European: Le Corbusier, Mies Van Der rohe and Walter Gropius. Don Sr., Donald, the writer's, father brought his architectural intensity into his home. DB grew up in one of the first modern houses in Houston, Texas. His mother was passionate about literature. DB was drafted into the Army and served a tour overseas at the tail end of the Korean war. DB had a strong-willed passionate and oppressive father - so did I. The architecture / dad Freudian angle got me hooked for the avalanche of information that followed. Roger Angel, fiction editor of the New Yorker anointed Barthelme as the next big thing in the mid-sixties. DB's fiction, while erudite, trenchant, funny and soulful is not accessible to

many readers. I love DB's work. He is explosively creative. His lived life is dull as dust. He sat at a desk and wrote all day every day for decades under the influence of copious amounts of vodka. He moved from small apartment to small apartment and always re-painted each new place white. Homage to the color of choice of hardcore modern architects. He died young probably from immune system failure due to inhaling oil-based paint fumes (my theory) the alcohol was no help. DB was on one end of a great paradigm juke in American letters when he was replaced on the New Yorker pedestal by minimalist / realist Raymond Carver who would have been a maudlin maximalist were it not for his editor Gordon Lish. DB has two brothers who are also esteemed authors of fiction, Steven and Frederick. It is very interesting to note that Donald and Frederick are on the two sides of the great New Yorker juke (too small to be a shift), DB being pomo and Frederick being a realist. There's the Bloomian swerve from one's precursor and what must be an even larger swerve, that from a famous brother, nice work Frederick, job well done.

Gulag - Anne Applebaum - The Gulag phenomenon was a horrible event for all who were caught up in it. Two million Soviet people experienced this industrial slavery. The Gulag system comprised several hundred camps located primarily across the northern region of the country where conditions were such that no person would choose to work there for any reason ever. This zone is bitterly cold during a very long winter and infested with mosquitoes and biting flies for the rest of the year. This happens to be the region where most of the soviet natural resources are located: timber and metal ores. Stalin knew that industrial development was the only direction for his country if it was to survive assault from neighbors and internal turmoil. The Soviet Union had to join the twentieth century as an industrial power or perish. Since no one would become forest workers or miners voluntarily, Stalin simply rounded people up, charged them with trumped up crimes and worked them to death in the prison camps in the inhospitable north. Anne Applebaum's book deals with the facts and figures of the Gulag system and she goes into vast detail recounting the inhumane conditions, humiliations. It was as if Stalin had re-created his childhood for the entire Soviet population: fear, misery, anxiety, hard work, humiliation, oblivion. The most potent image that remains from the book is a prisoner grasping a large handful of lice from her skin and putting them in her warm water for a nutritious soup. In retrospect, it was the raw materials that these soviet slaves retrieved out of the wretched north that paid for American trucks and machine tools with which Stalin produced the thousands of aircraft, tanks and cannons used to defeat the German Army prior to American involvement in the European theater in WWII. The Gulag generated raw material bounty, plus six million casualties created victory over Hitler's army. A very, very high price to pay. The west had one hundred years to achieve mechanization but with war on the horizon, Stalin had only a decade and the Gulag was the necessary pill the Soviet people had to take up their ass for this unnaturally rapid transition from a feudal society to a modern one. In a sense, it is the Gulag nightmare that saved hundreds of thousands of American lives during WWII. If Stalin hadn't drained a much of the power from the German Forces our "greatest generation" would have been decimated on European battlefields. Americans owe the Soviet people (Russians et al) big-time.

De Kooning - A Biography - Mark Stevens, Annalyn Swan - I first saw de Kooning's paintings in the U.S. Pavilion at the 1962 Seattle world's Fair when I was twelve. I have been following his work from his mid-career until the Linda and Paul McCartney phase when he was propped up at his huge canvasses at his Long Island studio in full Alzheimer's dementia with assistants mixing paint by the gallon and Elaine moving his arm around the canvas. This book tells the whole story beginning with his difficult childhood in Holland. He was a drawing prodigy as a child and achieved success in art school. Here again we have a very difficult mother. deKooning's mother regularly beat him as a child and abused him emotionally, she also lived to a ripe old age. There must be something therapeutic about abusing one's sons. Something about these problematic mothers fuels greatness. This book is a wonderful history of the New York art scene that centered on Tenth Street and eventually the Cedar Tavern where Pollock, Kline and de Kooning would drink themselves into conversation-filled oblivion nightly. de Kooning was painter's painter who planted himself in front of his work each day and remained there grappling with issues from his deep sub-conscious until his energy drained off. His wife Elaine, also a painter, was a huge benefit to his career. She was the social adept whose ambition for them both drew her to the critics and gallery owners who could lift a career from nowhere to the radar screen. She slept his way to the top. You can smell the oil paint and turpentine in this book. You can feel deK working his canvas day after day, week after week in a self-imposed deep therapy session, struggling. After the portraits of his mother emerged in the "Women" series he began to drink himself into a stupor every day and continued drinking for many years quickly eroding the edge from his work. For a few years during the late 50s after the Jackson Pollock smoke cleared, it was deKooning who emerged as the titan of the new York School. He was well-liked by all who met him and in his heyday, always generous with praise for less well known painters.

Henri Matisse - A Biography, - Hilary Spurling (two volumes) - This is a great book that establishes foremost, the chronology of Matisse's artistic development. This allows an accurate assessment of his relationship to the key developments in the Paris avant-garde. With information in this careful chronology one can clearly see that it is Matisse rather than Picasso who is the progenitor of twentieth century painting, that the starting point is not Picasso's "Le Femmes d'Alger" but any number of works by Matisse completed in the decade prior to Picasso's emergence as a Cubist. Matisse was far more than a maker of pretty pictures. His inventions with scale, composition, color, drawing, subject drew the attention (and fury) of the art establishment and cleared a path for young Picasso. Matisse was clearly Picasso's key precursor in Bloomian terms (see The Anxiety of Influence, Harold Bloom - a book you cannot not read along with The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn) as Matisse had been digesting the particulars of Late Cezanne and casting them into a visual language that formed the foundation for all that has followed. Think of the late work of Cezanne as the U.S. Constitution and the work of Matisse between 1900 and 1910 as the five foundational cases of the Marshall court (Chief justice from 1801-1835) that interpret the great document in practical ways for everyday commerce. Matisse was Chief Justice and Picasso was a brethren. Matisse taught us the meaning of Cezanne not in terms of the corporal content of these towering, soulful communions with god but in how these

revolutionary ideas of Cezanne might be expressed in original swerves. Once Picasso saw Matisse's swerves he knew he could also swerve. Not only away from Matisse but away from Cezanne himself. Matisse taught Picasso how to look at Cezanne, how one could look. Matisse was sickly throughout his adult life for unspecific reasons. I'll specify - he was breathing toxic petroleum distillates, paint thinner, turpentine, oil paint mediums all day, every day in claustrophobic garrets during his early years and in larger apartments and studios later. He was slowly poisoning himself as all artists in oil paints do. I had to stop working in oils twenty years ago due to health issues related to the fumes. Just as old people don't fall and break their bones - they break their bones and then fall, breaking still more bones. Artists aren't usually initially crazy or crazy and sick - they spend years breathing this oil-based poison then go off their rockers - see Van Gogh who chewed the toxic shit (mercury, Cadmium, cobalt) off of his brushes to soften them each morning. Matisse grew up in a village in northeastern France near Belgium that manufactured cloth for Parisian couture fashion. There were several small factories that competed with each other to develop the latest, most colorful and dynamic patterns for their cloth. Matisse grew up surrounded by man-made gorgeous colors and fabric textures. Color was in his blood.

Picasso - A Biography - John Richardson (two volumes of three) - What more do we need to know about Picasso? Picasso did not evolve from Cubism to his neo-classicism because he was an inveterate explorer who had exhausted the Cubist vein and had to discover a new avenue. He abandoned Cubism so save his ass during World War One. There developed a wartime fever to obliterate all things German from French life. Picasso's primary art dealer during his Cubist years was the German Kahnweiler and some German signs were spotted in a painting or two. Picasso had gotten in trouble with the law in his Louvre theft association with the thief and was questioned by police. He lived in fear of deportation. Cubism rocked the boat. Let's dial back until the smoke clears into this sensuous proto-classical riff. He was Gertrude Stein's little lap dog. The whole Picasso as macho bull, towering this and that was a reaction to being such a squirt during the first years of his Paris career. Fauvism and Cubism were the Supreme court and Matisse was chief justice. Matisse gets the nod as the key figure due not only to his date of entry in the service of modernism but to the depth and breadth of his ideas. We must as a people throw the blinders from our eyes that resulted from Gertrude Stein's wretched propagation of Matisse's casual remark about the intention of his work being to relax. He may have wished to relax after a decade of artistic conflict but the remark should not color his great innovations up to that point. Picasso's painting done prior to Cubism is, by far, his most valuable dollarwise today. His most prestigious work is his Cubist work done from 1907 to 1914. All of Picasso's work after Cubism was souvenirs with Guernica being a very potent one.